Sophia Mary Townshend —

SERMONS,

BY

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SERMON I.

MATTHEW v. 3.

Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

EVERLASTING truth is not to be meaſured by human prejudices; theſe if ever, are now to be met, reprobated, and rectified by him who comes commiſſioned by *his* heavenly Father and *our* Creator, *God bleſſed for evermore*, to ſhew the nature as well as the rewards of truth, to retrieve the knowledge and the hopes of which ſin had deſpoiled us, to ratify ſuch as ſtill lingered, though under a cloud, among us, and to add what farther were neceſſary for our perfection and ſalvation. It is well known what havock

pride had made in the human heart and underſtanding; but the great enemy of pride now comes forward; the new and requiſite light is now ariſen on the earth; and its firſt flaſhing forth is levelled at pride, whoſe aſpiring fabric had ſtood the ſhock of ages, but is now to be ſhattered to its foundation, and ſhall *anon* fall beneath the force of theſe few words, *bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* For in this *ſtill ſmall* voice of Deity, the divine teacher, ſenſible that he was *ultimately* addreſſing all men, tells them, that the poverty in ſpirit which had been commonly deſpiſed, is however by no means deſpicable; but that the poor in ſpirit are on the contrary, honourable in the higheſt degree, on account of their diſtance in deſire and purſuit from the uſual objects of human ambition; and therefore ſhall be proportionally honoured, not by a terreſtrial dignity, by a lofty ſtation on a tranſitory ſtage, but by a permanent power, and a ſublimer glory, for *theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Therefore, as pride is ſtill too general, and of courſe, ſtill ſo productive of evil, that it may be accounted at once the moſt univerſal and

and pernicious vice of mankind.—I ſhall endeavour to ſhew firſt, that poverty in ſpirit is *in part* ſupported by the beſt authority of human reaſon; and ſecondly (but in a ſubſequent diſcourſe), attempt ſuch a true delineation of pride and humility in their effects, as may rationally induce us, in conſequence of our own obſervation, to *love* the virtue, which a divine authority commands us to practiſe.

This virtue, poverty in ſpirit, ſeems compounded of moderation of deſire reſpecting things temporal, and of humility. There is an *inſtructive* propriety in the term; it is expreſſive of the temper, and not its object; but it is expreſſive of ſuch a temper as is at once inconſiſtent with ſecular pride, and ſecular deſire, and leads to the purſuit of that kingdom which is its appointed reward.

Things temporal, the riches and pleaſures, the glory and power of this world, have been the uſual objects of exceſſive deſire. This we learn from the hiſtory of former ages, and the preſent conduct of mankind too much reſembles the paſt. It is a ſcene diſturbed by exceſſive, and tumultuous with interfering impulſes and purſuits: a capable mind ſhrinks beneath the

collective view of man in act, and borrowing the expreſſions of Solomon, exclaims—what vanity and vexation of ſpirit! anxiety, contention, and ſorrow (the latter on account of loſſes and diſappointments), with a miſerable waſte of time, and the conſequent neglect of attainable and ſuperior bleſſings, are the effects of an immoderate conduct.* Few, I fear, are the individuals who can pronounce themſelves to have been perfectly *poor in ſpirit*, or that have not been unhappy in proportion to their deviation from this duty: a duty, which perfectly obſerved, includes the whole art of human life, and is that comprehenſive and conſummate prudence *in act*, which at once regards a man's ſelf, his neighbour, and God, takes at once an account of time and eternity, and is the only means of ſecuring to man the utmoſt happineſs of which he is capable, and for which he was created.

* Chriſtian moderation, the platonic tranquillity of mind, the ſtoical purſuit of things within our own power, Butler's ſtatement of peace and quiet as the great object of our aim, and Harris's recommendation of moral rectitude of behaviour as the principal point of deſire and exertion—all tend the ſame way, and iſſue in poverty of ſpirit reſpecting things temporal.

Yet

Yet if he will not thus cheriſh his ſoul with quiet paſſions, but will, in defiance of reaſon and religion, ruſh forwards into the fields of folly and conteſt, and be dependant, and at the mercy (one may ſay) of the precarious winds —he acts like a child, and will be as querulous as the puling infant when robbed of its toy; and now come on his clamours againſt falſe friends, and his tragic deſcriptions of human life; and he that ſhould have been *full of honours* as well as *years*, drops murmuring into the grave, having never ſuſpected his own miſconduct, or gathered up the ſufficient bleſſings which God had laid at his feet: aiming immoderately at things unattainable, or unſatisfying, he has loſt every thing; his expectations being *vanity*, he has incurred *vexation*; and refuſing to be *poor in ſpirit*, he has *abounded* (God help him) with miſeries, the creation of folly, and the penalties of ſin.

Surely, alas! it muſt be *univerſally* ſeen and acknowledged, that men in general have not been poor in ſpirit reſpecting the poſſeſſions of this world, but have miſapplied their active ardour, and imported into life much unneceſſary evil. But the wiſe man who

conſiders what other evils can ariſe from any other ſource, will correct my expreſſion, and pronounce, that nearly *every* evil under the ſun is the reſult of this miſconduct. Therefore the wiſe man, the *royal* ſage, founding his report upon facts, upon the actual miſconduct of men ſays, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity under the ſun." Otherwiſe this world, uſed agreeably to the will of God, and not abuſed by the *wilfulneſs* of man, is not more vain than heaven itſelf. All the works of God are *good*. Man, it was, that *unparadiſed* the earth, and rendered its hiſtory a record of calamities: and though it cannot detail all the forms of miſery which have exiſted, yet all of them are to be traced to one ſource, the *immoderate* valuation, deſire, and purſuit of things temporal. This, in truth, this alone is the matter which ferments itſelf into all the ſhapes of human miſery, and exceſſive paſſion having firſt excited the chaos in the human ſoul, things external from this diſorder within, are become the means of human affliction.

No wonder therefore, that the wiſeſt men who have buſied themſelves in ſearching for the chief good of mankind, have uſually placed

placed it in a tranquil and moderate purſuit of a few neceſſary temporal bleſſings, referring the principal energies of human affection and aim, to virtue and moral attainments. They were conſcious, and they could demonſtrate (indeed many of them have often demonſtrated) that hereby they encouraged men to the purſuit only of what was moſt deſirable, and yet was always to be obtained. This, they knew, was the plan, which brought into act, would preclude the principal means of conteſt and diſappointment. They could (the moſt of them) reaſon with preciſion, and they alſo reaſoned *well*, becauſe they worked with the materials which life itſelf ſupplied. Simply obſerving what nature* was, and man did, they

* *E. g.* By obſerving in man two affections, the one reſpecting ſelf, and the other his neighbour, they deduced the *ſeparate* exiſtence of ſelf love and benevolence, and their reſpective duties—they knew not the power of beating out the latter into the former by metaphyſical hammering, and making them *one* at the expence of degrading the human, and blaſpheming the divine character. Biſhop Butler's ariſtotelic, yet chriſtian ſermons, upon this important ſubject, demoliſh theſe pernicious cobwebs, otherwiſe unworthy of ſuch a demolition, were it not for the many pitiably *volatile* intellects which might flutter their way into them, and *periſh in their folly*. Hiſtory, ſays

they could accurately aſcertain the reſpective character, and effect of each virtuous act and temper; their concluſions were inductions from experience and obſervation on what paſſed or had paſſed in life, and not the chimeras of ſolitary reverie; and they could thence *prove* (what were otherwiſe *ſurmiſe*), that virtue was at once the law of God, and the proper work of reaſon: therefore virtue and wiſdom were with them, as with Solomon, but different names of the ſame thing; their concluſion of courſe was the ſame—*her ways are the ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.*

Such obſervers could not but eſpecially remark the ſuperior happineſs of thoſe,

Thucidydes (and no wonder therefore that he wrote hiſtory ſo well), is philoſophy drawn from example; upon which the pious and learned Cave obſerves, that the one is a more groſs and popular philoſophy, the other a more ſubtle and refined hiſtory —but then it muſt be ſuch a philoſophy as Biſhop Butler's, and altogether *a courſe* of reaſoning from facts: it muſt be, as it were, fleſh and blood upon bones, and compelled into its form by the internal baſis of facts, and not *gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire*, or the groteſque images of mere wit rolling within itſelf, aud ſhewing us how far its contorſions can go for the amuſement of ſome, the pity of others, and the pernicious imitations of the *great and little vulgar*.

whoſe

whoſe infantine age, child-like innocence, unambitious ignorance, and humble occupations ſecured them (without deſign) more happineſs than is generally attained. Moderate men are in the ſtate intended by God; for in them *reaſon* predominates. They provoke not conteſt by ſtruggling for the rare and great prizes of this world; nor aim at a *monopoly* of bleſſings, ſacrificing to the intemperate deſires and tyrannical rapacity of themſelves, *a few*, what is ſufficient, and what ſhould be left to gratify the temperate, the juſt, the reaſonable demands of *many*; they are not as rapacious pikes in the great river of life, neither do they ſtand by it to throw in vaſt nets, but as the modeſt and patient angler; they would not pamper the body at the expence of the mind, nor by the fanciful purſuit of an airy meteor, ſtumble upon ſolid evils, and ſcatter out of their poſſeſſion the ſubſtantial bleſſings, which they allowed to hang careleſſly and unnoticed about them; they are ſufficed with requiſite food, and raiment, and habitation, with a mind vacant to enjoy the converſe of man, to obſerve the works of God, and to mingle the hopes of his continuing favour with the gentle melodies of a good conſcience.

conſcience. But theirs alſo is the kingdom of heaven, and for this *(the utmoſt good)* they are dependant only upon HIM, whoſe eye ſees all things, whoſe arm is almighty, and whoſe exiſtence is eternal.

Thus religion provides an object for the nobler aſpirations of man. God has not placed us in a ſtate of puniſhment, but trial. He would not extinguiſh our native ardour after eminent good; he would not ſuppreſs any ingenuous tendencies, any inſtinctive grandeur of our nature; he hath not thus *created* to *deſtroy*; but he hath alſo given us reaſon, and by the gift of this ruling, this inſtructive faculty, ſuggeſted its uſe in governing the paſſions, ſtating their degrees, appointing their courſe, and regulating their *every* movement.

The inclinations which tempt us into evil actions, cannot in all inſtances, corrupt our judgment. Principles of everlaſting propriety are not eaſily overthrown; and the miſt of paſſion, although it may obſcure, does not altogether deſtroy the eyeſight of reaſon. Therefore all men (not the wiſer only) are ready to acknowledge the ſuperior happineſs of

of thoſe individuals whoſe conduct appears diſtinguiſhed by moderation. And we ſecretly pay this diſpoſition the higheſt praiſe, by wiſhing ſuch as are connected with ourſelves to be diſtinguiſhed by it. This, I ſhould think, is an univerſal wiſh; and ought to create an univerſal principle in favour of moderation. But the beſt principles in any individual, are truly worthleſs to him, if his conduct is not correſpondent to them. The reaſon of a man is either his guide, or diſgrace; either juſtifies, or condemns him; is certainly a talent entruſted him by the *Lord of all things*, and ſhould not be *buried*; and to him who has this gift, much has been given, and from him much will be required.

Eaſily as the imagination (that weak maſter and capable ſervant) is beguiled, nothing immoderate has been generally admired. Men readily diſtinguiſh between what is extraordinary and what is immoderate. Acts of extraordinary excellency may excite admiration till it amounts to applauſive aſtoniſhment; but ſuch acts are then never unreaſonable, and are therefore conſiſtent with moderation. And where moderation has not uſually been found,

found, as in men of the higheſt power and ſublimeſt ſtations in ſociety, in conquerors immediately after an important victory, in perſons newly poſſeſſing a great and ſudden proſperity, or raiſed by their own efforts, or the favour of other men, from a low or indigent condition, to greatneſs or affluence; in men uncommonly learned or eloquent, or naturally endowed with a very ſuperior intellect, if in theſe moderation appears, with a juſt ſenſe that they are but receivers and truſtees, by divine favour, of ſuch gifts; there is in ſuch a conduct ſuch a truth of good ſenſe, and ſuch ſweetneſs of temper, that it eaſily wins the applauſe of the worthy, and prevents, or eſcapes, or repels without effort the malice of the mean and envious. Such is moderation, and that it is ſuch cannot be queſtioned; for *reaſon* is moſt upon its throne at the moment when the paſſions are wont to predominate, and yet are trampled under its feet. It is *great* in a juſtifiable cauſe, to vanquiſh what is uſually victorious; and we ſcarcely employ an image too ſtrong when we place the ſeat of magnanimity in the centre of a *ſtorm*. Every man in this life is ſtormed around

around by temptations, nor becomes magnanimous till he becomes *poor in ſpirit*. Whatever may be the erroneous opinions of human pride—man is not till then, in the beſt ſenſe of the character, *the conqueror of the world*. He will not then *pine in vain* for advancements in the track of glory: his glory is genuine, is the beſt, and the more to be deſired, becauſe pronounced only by God. It will then really live for ever, be echoed by thoſe tongues that never praiſe amiſs, and be attended by thoſe angelic pomps which we cannot imagine, and not deride in compariſon with them the paſſing pageantry and ſpecious frivolities of a Roman and Babylonian triumph. Theſe are not mere words if man is immortal; they are replete with ſolid truth, they are conſolatory to the whole human race, and demonſtrate the one perfect aim of human ambition, which is not only conſiſtent with, but conducive to the beſt diſcharge of every conceivable duty in human ſociety.

Moderation admits every ſituation in life, and hath its employment in all. Place is not neceſſary to character, or a certain condition to temper. The ſlave Epictetus, and the emperor Antoninus were equally lords of their

paſſions

paſſions in the two moſt oppoſite, in the two moſt *trying* conditions of human nature.

It ſeems then, that poverty in ſpirit, ſo far as it is moderation of deſire reſpecting things temporal, is ſupported by the higheſt authority of human reaſon. Truly its cauſe is that of reaſon itſelf; for what is a moderate conduct, but reaſon diſplayed in act; or a moderate man, but one who governs his imagination and paſſions, and maintains reaſon in its due place and authority? he ſhall be found to underſtand the beſt art of repelling or preventing evil. He precludes needleſs attentions, and is at liberty to cultivate ſuch as his duty and beſt intereſts recommend. He governs the impulſes of the moment, nor is betrayed by the faſhions of the times; he is perfectly conſiderate; he takes a due account of the times paſt and to come; he is provided, he is prepared, he is duly armed againſt all events; he cannot be ſurpriſed, he cannot be diſappointed; nor can he be ſeduced into conteſt and controverſy by narrowneſs or meanneſs of mind. Yet at the ſame time he will not be withheld by any immoderate deſires of ſecular greatneſs and affluence, in accommodation

dation to the powerful perſons or humours of the day, from concentring all the ſtrength of his intellect and affections in advancing the intereſts of mankind—by enforcing the belief and practice of truths and duties *generally* admitted, and of the utmoſt importance.

This will be his work, though (with St. Paul) *he ſhould be troubled on every ſide: though without there ſhould be fightings.* But I conceive if this has been, and if this continues to be his work, that *within* there will not be many *fears.** For poor in ſpirit, as he may be, in the worſt form of deſire, he is the braveſt of men in the beſt form of fortitude.

In ſhort, the moderate man is one whoſe underſtanding is disfranchiſed from paſſion, and at liberty to diſcern (what his heart is as free to love and to purſue) everlaſting proprieties, and everlaſting intereſts.

How then can we wonder that to effect ſo great a thing as this maſtery of the reaſon over the paſſions, the moſt exquiſite and renowned labours of the human intellect have

* 2 Cor. vii. 5.

been

been applied. Never, never indeed has the light of wiſdom ſhone ſo brightly, ſo ſtrongly, and ſo beautifully, as when its rays were diſtributed in this glorious direction. Praiſed be God for this providential diſplay in favour of virtue; that he hath not left the nations *who ſat in darkneſs* without this witneſs of his law, and has thereby taught all ages the harmony of reaſon and religion. But that virtue might not want its beſt foundations, God has added its ſuperior ratification not only by patriarchal, prophetical, and apoſtolical enforcements, but by the precepts and example of his bleſſed Son. It is, more eſpecially, an important ſervice done to mankind by chriſtianity, that its divine authority tears up (root and branch) that Pride under whoſe ſhadow many of the favourite ſons of human wiſdom had been accuſtomed to take ſhelter—not then knowing the nature of true magnanimity, or perfectly qualified to adorn *in all things* their own doctrine of moderation.

After all—be it ſtill gratefully owned to the end of time, that of mere men theſe have been the moſt beautiful, ſublime, and beneficial characters which have graced this earth: if

if not the loudeſt, yet the moſt melodious reports of fame have attended, and ſtill attend the remembrance of them: but although theſe are the worthies who chiefly merit honour and renown from generation to generation, yet, as it were the moon among the ſtars, thus in its ſuperiority of influence, uſe, and ſplendor, ſhines the character of our Lord and Saviour among theſe his attendant glories. They conſtitute one ſuperior ſyſtem of illumination; they conſtitute one auguſt order, one mild luſtre of perfect wiſdom, for the direction of *benighted* mortals; and every thing on earth, in the eye of reaſon, is dark but themſelves, and that which reflects or is ſeen and approved by their *everlaſting* light.*

* It is much to the honour of the inſpired writers (ſays the Biſhop of Worceſter, Serm. vol. i. p. 161), becauſe it ſhews them to be no enthuſiaſts; that, with all their zeal for the revealed doctrines of the goſpel, they never forget or overlook the common duties of *humanity*; thoſe duties which reaſon itſelf, a prior revelation, had made known to the wiſer part of mankind.

SERMON II.

MATTHEW v. 3.

Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

WHEN men firſt heard their Redeemer thus ſpeaking, the leſſons of virtue preſented a new form as well as authority.

Whatever happy recommendations might have been beſtowed upon the other virtues by *human* wiſdom, the *divine* was requiſite to explain as well as enforce the duty of humility.*

Poverty

* *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.* A certain ſeparation of themſelves, as if a higher order, if not ſpecies, from the reſt of mankind, too generally characterizes the uninſpired ſages of

Poverty in ſpirit, as the *chriſtian* virtue, is not only moderation of deſire reſpecting things temporal, but alſo the greateſt humility. Moderation of deſire reſpecting things temporal has a double office, for it at once appropriates to this or that object its *degree* of paſſion, and renders *all* paſſion *ſubordinate* to the deſire of pleaſing God, and procuring his *everlaſting* rewards.

We of courſe would *firſt* learn our duty from *God*, and I cannot but think, that the method in which it is taught by his bleſſed Son, was never yet equalled by *man*. For inſtance, and with reſpect to the virtue of humility; when the Diſciples coming to Jeſus,* ſaid, Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?—the auguſt teacher (with a divine rapidity of thought, and a power of inſtructing

of antiquity; a circumſtance in which we cannot wonder that the modern unbelievers ſhould reſemble them, however we may be ſurpriſed and lament, to ſee them alſo reſembled in this reſpect by thoſe chriſtians, of *whatever* denomination, who believe all other men but themſelves to be in a ſtate of damnation, and that the divine favour ſhines only upon their *corner*.

* Matt. xviii.

the moſt admirable and ſucceſsful) called a little child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them. *Ye* know the uſe which our bleſſed Lord was to make of the child, as an emblem of lowlineſs and humility; but recollect, that *then* the *Diſciples* could not know it, and therefore let us now review that moment, and image to ourſelves their ſhame, and, it is probable, wonder mingled with delight, when the Divine Maſter addreſſed them in the following manner: *Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.*

The Diſciples had put a queſtion to our Saviour expreſſive of pride; he at firſt gives them no anſwer, but calls the little child to him; they muſt have been ſurpriſed at the act, and ſtruck with reverent curioſity; but ſo juſt was the application which the great teacher made of the prepared circumſtance, that a new light muſt have flaſhed upon them like lightning, and this *word of God* muſt have been more *quick*, and *powerful*, and *ſharp*, than *any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing*

dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and muſt have made them *feel* how much the divine ſpeaker had *diſcerned the* proud *thoughts, and* ambitious *intents of their* ſecular *hearts.* It was indeed a flaſh of lightning from *heaven* to clear a cloudy atmoſphere, and thereby bring into view a far more beautiful picture of humility, than either the dry definitions of human philoſophy, or the flowery declamations of human eloquence have ever produced.

Well then—ſhall we too ſit at the feet of our *common* Lord, and receive with reverence the leſſon which was thought proper for the holy Apoſtles?

This image of the little child preſented to them, ſuggeſts not only the infantine humility, but alſo ſimplicity, that entire freedom from all the deep and intricate deſigns of ſelfiſhneſs and worldly ambition, which are as inconſiſtent with the artleſs quality of children, as with the generous and holy views, hopes, and purpoſes of the mature chriſtian. Magnanimity, which has ſurely ſtill its place in human practice, and expreſſes the higheſt and beſt form of fortitude and generoſity, had however hitherto ſo played before the imagination of

man, that ſeeking after it he had over-ſtepped into pride; and therefore to counteract this miſtake of *human* wiſdom, the *divine* early, and with all its energy, brings forwards the grace of humility or modeſty, which however ſo coincides with magnanimity, that it is not only its prudent and reſtraining counſellor, but the friend which adds to the dignity of its movement, by checking all tendency to oſtentation; and to its beneficent operation, by withſtanding the ready whiſpers of pride. In ſhort—humility, modeſty, poverty in ſpirit, is the beſt temper of moderation reſpecting things and perſons, preventing vehemence and exceſs of purſuit, or any thing vain reſpecting ourſelves, or any thing inſolent, oppreſſive, and proud reſpecting our fellow creatures: it ſurely leads a man to *walk humbly* before his Creator; but it is by no means an abject ſelf-deſertion at the expence of truth and propriety—it is a *virtue*, and every virtue is founded in reaſon, and is inconſiſtent with nonſenſe and abſurdity, with folly and madneſs. Humility is peculiarly oppoſed to pride.

This

This favourite and cruel child of Selfiſhneſs is ſo various in its operations, and ſo extenſively and egregiouſly pernicious, that to enumerate all its ill effects were impoſſible; and to reprobate it in general terms, or to ſhew its guilt by abſtract argumentation, would not excite that averſion to it which its flagitiouſneſs requires. I ſhall therefore ſpecify a few of its evil habits and acts, as they come foremoſt to recollection (I could almoſt ſay to *fight*); and this in order to impreſs more ſtrongly upon your minds my purpoſed and concluding view of humility.

Let me then appeal to your experience, and aſk you, whether there is any thing more offenſive than apparent pride, or more troubleſome than the effects of it, under whatever diſguiſe? Are you diſtreſſed, will the proud man pity you? yes, when pride and ſympathy, ſelfiſhneſs and benevolence are as one. If you would converſe with him for the purpoſe of diſcovering *truth*, you are oppreſſed with a diſpute for *victory*, ſhould he deign to converſe with you; but at the ſame time he will, it is probable, repay your arguments by declamations, dogmatical decrees, malicious ſarcaſms, or angry cenſures, or at leaſt by

arguments as ſubtle and vibrant as the viper's tongue, and as envenomed as the poiſon that lurks beneath its teeth. Such is his pride, and ſuch his ignorance of it, that if you reſiſt its tyranny, you, in his fancy, become the *proud* aggreſſor, and the object of his vengeance. Hope not to adviſe him, or that he will adviſe himſelf; I have no occaſion for advice (he ſays to himſelf), why then ſhould I receive it from another man; or with my felicity of intellect meaſure out my courſe with the ordinary cautions of ordinary minds? Dreadful ſituation this for *probationary* man, who although as wiſe as Solomon, and as old as Methuſelah, is ſtill but at ſchool in *this life!* horrible condition of *fallen* man, when He who bowed the heavens themſelves, and came to viſit us with ſuch wondrous humility, to make us *humble*, lays in vain before us the code of lowly penitence, and we *trample* it under our feet!

For he that will not ſtep through *admonition* can never arrive at *repentance*—this *purchaſed* threſhold of heaven. But is it not common to ſee, that this contempt of advice ends alſo in the *temporal* ruin of the proud man? And doth

doth he even then know himſelf? very ſeldom; every one concerned with him was in fault but himſelf; the ſtorm but the more enrages him, and he rolls his cloak of pride around him, and *curſes God and dies*.*

He is the haughtieſt member of ſociety, for he doth not *take* but *ſeize* his place, and with ſuch a precipitate puſh for preeminence, as to ruſh (and not a little) beyond it, and injure others; infringing upon their rights by injuſtice, and their quiet by contention.† His, in truth, is the hand which levels the barriers of juſtice, far and wide indeed, when it wields a royal

* Job.

† Whereas, ſaith a good old Engliſh writer, Biſhop Hall (with ſome quaintneſs indeed, but alſo with ſome ſenſe and invention of imagery), of the *humble man*, "he is a lowly valley ſweetly planted, and well watered; the proud man's earth, whereon he trampleth; but ſecretly full of wealthy mines, more worth than he that walks over them; a rich ſtone ſet in lead; and laſtly, a true temple of God built with a low roof".

Thus ſaith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Iſaiah (the *evangelical* prophet indeed), lvii. 15.

ſceptre;

ſceptre; and his the tongue which cries havock to the nations, when it can utter the murderous decrees of *imperial* ambition. But whatever be his ſtation (whether pride harraſſes equally the world by the little miſchiefs of numerous little agents, or a few great ones), he dilates his power beyond the lines of equity, and though it is but as a ſpark, he fans it into a great and deſtructive flame. He cannot practice a juſt and mannerly attention to you, but uſurps the power of bending, yes, and if need be, breaking every thing till it meets his own humours: thus his pride is taxed by his miſerable ignorance of man. He cannot *graciouſly* enforce, and therefore *ſeldom* enforces any thing; he is far better qualified to drive a ſword through the heart of man, than to procure its good will; for he ſcorns addreſs and accommodation, and thereby provokes hatred and reſiſtance, and is uſually puniſhed with the pangs of diſappointment, and the worſt irritations of rage. Should his miſconceptions of human nature take another courſe, and lead him into an attempt to advance ambitious points by deceitful practices upon the underſtanding of other men, he is uſually

uſually diſcovered and deteſted; honeſt, it may be, in other reſpects, and well endowed with intellectual parts, if he treats men in general as *fools*, they will take little account of his *wiſdom*, nor allow it any exerciſe in the government of them. Fraud purchaſes little, and there is nothing on *earth* worth the price; it is the invention of the *fool*, and the reſource of the *knave*; it begins in *madneſs*, and ends in *miſery*.

Anger is never more at home than in the breaſt of the proud man: for he cannot but encourage his own anger, ſtretch himſelf upon its wheel, and unknowingly call for his torturer. At leaſt it may be ſaid, that there is much pride, and no humility in anger; and if the proud are ſometimes of a compoſed temper, it is becauſe they are of a contemptuous one, and are then only under ſubjection to the milder fiend of the two, and are ſtill afflicted by a mental diſeaſe which mars contentment.

I paſs to other, and different views of the proud man.—When reſerved he is myſterious, and when communicative, dogmatical: he is a ſtranger to the little charities of affability, and deſpoiled of their recommending grace,

alſo

alſo wants, amidſt the ſtorms of life, the protecting ſtrength of this ſoft and beauteous covering.

His, in truth, is the ſeat of the *ſcorner*, in which he ſits *exultingly*, nor is he ſlow to *ruſh* into the throne of *judgment*; great is then his ardour to condemn, and he requires not any other evidence for the ſevereſt ſentence, than his own ſuſpicion. Nor is it enough for him to judge man, but he judges alſo the great Judge of all; ſnatches his *reaſon* from the tuition of faith, of God himſelf, and his *heart* from the civilizing joys of charity. Who is he that *gives his goods to the poor*, but *hath not charity?* the proud man, who gives his goods to the poor for the purpoſe of oſtentation. His heart alſo is entwined with all the vipers of envy, which hiſs detraction, and blaſt with their breath the buds of merit and proſperity when he ſees them growing in other men.

It may be ſaid in *general* of pride that it hardens advice into condemnation, condemnation into perſecution, learning into pedantry, *reviving* courteſies into *killing* forms, opinion into conviction, zeal into bigotry, ſorrow into peeviſhneſs or rage (as fear or courage may predominate),

predominate), and laſhes on (according to place or opportunity) ambition into injuſtice, violence, and murder.

Ye call this age *poliſhed*; what—when Pride is permitted to utter her ſucceſsful edict, and to commit the ſtandard of remorſeleſs vengeance into the hands of the *duelliſt?* Muſt men be *menaced* into good manners, and, as the felon, be kept within this line, from the fear of *death?* And ſhall the *poliſhed* individual rather hazard his own and another's life, than forgive *any* collection of *words?* Muſt a *verbal* affront be repaid by *blood*, by the miſeries of *unoffending* friends and relations, by this *gaſh* into the heart of the venerable parent, the beloved wife, and expected bride, by this ſhattering of good order, this enormous defiance of the laws of God and man? Great allowances are to be made for youths educated *in this age*, they claim pity and protection, and the whole energy of human power ſhould riſe into act to protect the *world-enveloped* boy from his own falſe pride, and as things are now circumſtanced, from his too natural idolatry of a ſpecious honour.

Every

Every fierce movement is the natural courſe of pride; a cohort of contentions prepare her way; it is the march of a deſolating Goth; all the works of the ingenuous arts are trampled beneath her footſteps; benefactors, though princes, are received as tributaries, and the petition of diſtreſs as a diſorderly intruſion; Diſtreſs, even Diſtreſs herſelf, is daſhed to the ground by her iron gauntlet: you may call her pride, but her name is alſo *Ingratitude*, and her firſtborn *Cruelty*.

Is the proud man your *ſuperior*—what cool contemptuous reſerve, what haughtineſs, what tyranny, what negligence of *ever-requiſite* decencies, what *effrontery* of ingratitude, what inſolence of caprice, and inhuman perfidy in friendſhip! *his* countenance expreſſes no ſympathy with *yours*, and is as tenacious of its one determinate and *predetermined* expreſſion, as the inanimated buſt of marble. But pride is not the artiſt to give this expreſſion ſuch a character as any great and good man would wiſh his buſt of marble to wear; for it is very legible, very forbidding, very odious. Wretched man how he *exalts* himſelf to be the more *abaſed*, and how he labours through life to ſharpen the ſting of death, and magnify the

the triumphs of the grave! Pride was not made for man, nothing but virtue can juſtify any thing like it; but the virtuous man, as ſuch, is humble.

But if the proud man is your *inferior*, his behaviour is ſtill more offenſive, for here no good manners interfere *for the ſake of a man's ſelf:* he is all at looſe to worry your repoſe; he ruſhes, Cynic-like, upon you with all the coarſeneſs of clamour and rapine.

Pride in low eſtate is indocile to the lawful inſtructor, and diſobedient to the proper maſter, is negligent of its humbler duties, and receives benefactions as juſt wages, uniting ignorance with inſolence and ingratitude. Hence the gall that pollutes the ſweets of domeſtic happineſs. But if theſe votaries of pride *embody*, become a multitude, a national ſtrength, it is as a deſtructive whirlwind, rapid in its movements and quick to deſtroy the faireſt fabrics of ages, aſking ages to rebuild them. Thus the Northern ſtorms whirled away the greatneſs of Rome, and ſhattered to the ground the civilization of heaven-inſtructed Aſia. The latter, like its Babylon, is ſtill one maſs of ruins, however

it

it may differ in its form of deſtruction. The lower ranks of mankind, when in their laſt act to trouble and confound eſtabliſhed order, are, I ſay, like thoſe barbarous nations who ſwept the earth before them, and after the lapſe of centuries are ſtill to be traced in the preſent ruinous ſtate of once-flouriſhing regions. Italy itſelf, after all its papal pampering, has not yet recovered from the blow of Northern barbarity. And how near were ourſelves, from the like cauſe, to ſee our Metropolis burnt to the ground, and a beacon flaming upon this *eminence* which would have been anſwered by the like in every part of the empire. So pride works when its trumpet rouſes the lower orders into act. It is as the inruſhing of the banked-out ſea upon the land which had been won, upon the ſpur of rugged neceſſity, by patient toil and generous ingenuity, from that devouring element. Oh! then, may he who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, preſerve the *elevated* banks which are oppoſed to this peril from being *diſſolved* by luxury, *diſparted* by faction, and *undermined* by irreligion. Therefore may pride tutor them no longer into ſelfiſhneſs, but leave the mind

mind vacant to that pure patriotiſm and genuine wiſdom, which is inſpired by mercy to take the wideſt courſe of beneficence, to meet with addreſsful courage the evil of the day, and to provide by all poſſible attentions, a ſuperior proſperity for the coming generations. And let them, and let all men be aware, however pride would *exalt* a man, that it cannot but *abaſe* him into a condition the moſt contemptible: and no wonder, for the minion of this deſpot is meanneſs; his counſellor, folly; and his agent, fury. Let not *ſentiment* condemn the deſcriptions which experience ratifies.

Pride at once boaſts and trembles; is at once fooliſh and miſerable: for it is pride only which exaſperates the ſenſe of *real* injuries, which conceives falſe cauſes of reſentment or ſorrow, which multiplies little afflictions, increaſes the greater, and is often ſuch a genuine ſelf-tormentor, as to ruſh upon the laſt moſt fatal, irreverſible act of ſelf-deſertion, ſelf-torture, *ſelf-murder*, and then man riſes in the moſt horrible rebellion againſt God.

Pride was *a murderer from the beginning*, it ſlew Abel, and it crucified Chriſt. But though Cain was the firſt who unſheathed the murderer's ſword, it is ſtill unſheathed, becauſe it is ſtill brandiſhed by Pride.

God ſees all the ſorrows inflicted by man upon man; and man too ſhall ſee them recorded by the finger of God in the book of *final* manifeſtation. Oh! may it not at that time be to us, as was *his* hand-writing ſeen upon the wall by the *proud* Belſhazzar.

Yes, I pray you, conſider the proud man in his grave; bid Truth inſcribe his epitaph, and write only this: here lies a *proud* man, who ſhall riſe at the laſt day to be judged by the *humble* Jeſus.*

And now (laſtly) let us relieve our minds, diſguſted with the contemplation of deformity, by the view of *chriſtian* humility.

* O eloquent, juſt, and mighty death (ſaith the eloquent Raleigh, after his hiſtoric ſurvey of human greatneſs), whom none could adviſe, thou haſt perſuaded; what none have dared, thou haſt done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only haſt caſt out of the world and deſpiſed; thou haſt drawn together all the far ſtretched greatneſs, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man; and covered it all over with this ſhort ſentence—*here he lies*.

Such

Such deſcriptions refer themſelves to your own obſervations on life, and ſhould they ſtand this teſt, your boſoms cannot receive them with a ſlight impreſſion. Truth is then ſhewn you (no matter by *whom*); ye then make your own inferences, and model your own improvements.

If poverty in ſpirit is ſomewhat inferior to charity in lovelineſs of demeanour, there is however a very ſiſterly reſemblance as well as amity between them. In the continually recurring, and therefore important duties of ſocial civility, poverty in ſpirit is a very principal agent: for where courteſy is but pretended, the maſk muſt be wrought after the features of genuine humility. Poverty in ſpirit diſpoſes to gratitude for all the favours beſtowed by God and man, and alike receives whatever evil from any quarter, with a gentle and lowly temper: ſurely then this virtue is favourable to cheerfulneſs, inſenſible to the common cauſes of diſpute and diſcord, and ſmooths the way to contentment. It is a temper alſo that diſpoſes a man to *learn* with humility, and to *obey* (when obedience is a duty) with the utmoſt readineſs; it is therefore

eſſentially neceſſary for the preſervation of good order reſpecting *ſociety*, and the advancement of every laudable quality, and accompliſhment in the *individual*. It is the moral habit by which education (appointed by the *firſt* Creator to be only not the *ſecond* creator of man) effects its great work. Poverty in ſpirit ſtands a barrier between our natural pride, and the ſubtleſt approaches of flattery; more eſpecially that ſecret *ſelf-flattery* which is diſcovered and reſiſted with the greateſt difficulty, being always ſo nigh at hand, ſo habitual, and ſo much ſtronger on account of our ſelf-love, than what comes from another perſon, and approaches us with the betraying traits of a hypocritical countenance and aſſumed expreſſion: therefore poverty in ſpirit is a moſt invaluable friend, by being the friend of *ſelf-knowledge*. It obliges the great and powerful to be gracious and condeſcending, and in them prevents that arrogance and thoſe inattentions, which diſſolve that union between the higher and lower ranks which holds together the maſs of mankind in good order. The rebellion in the feet is not a little aſcribable to the pride in the head: a father,

ſays

ſays Solomon, muſt not provoke his child to wrath. And if reſpect and affection are not the links of the two orders, theſe component parts of ſociety eaſily ſtart aſunder; ſuch is their natural antipathy in other reſpects, from the *pride* of the one, and from the *envy* of the other. Where poverty in ſpirit preſides, the humbler offices and ſituations of life are endeared and dignified by contentment and cheerfulneſs. It is every where the ſpecial guardian of the domeſtic peace and humanities, as it ſecures the *whole family* of mankind in the diſpoſition which moſt ſtrongly ties the bond of fellow feeling and brotherly love, and therefore curbs the outſets of national ambition, and aſſuages the rancour of national pride and prejudice. It is indeed the principal civilizer of mankind, by promoting good order, and alſo by ſubduing the human temper into a pliability to every improvement moral and intellectual. It is not eager after the objects of ſenſuality and vain glory, and is therefore favourable to health by temperance, and to domeſtic eaſe by frugality; but this is the frugality which is the parent of generoſity; and poverty in ſpirit will be moſt able to

relieve the diſtreſs which its lowly and gentle diſpoſition will incline it to pity, and of courſe to relieve. You cannot conceive a man humble, and inhuman at the ſame time: ſet the roots of his character thus low, and it will of neceſſity produce many rich and ſplendid virtues; for it is only drawn back to return with the greater force, and *exaltation* is the reſult of its *abaſement*. All the lovelier emotions of the heart are aſſiſted by poverty in ſpirit. The poor in ſpirit are very ſlow to cenſure; but they cannot poſſibly perſecute the opinions of others, for they cannot offend other men by the expreſſion of ſelf-complacency in any *illiberal* form. They take due account of the general rights, and the general infirmities of man, and would conſider as the *ſeed* of external perſecution any *internal* ſelf-complacencies, which are not agreeable to thoſe rights and infirmities. They are peculiarly conſiderate, and conſideration makes the mind comprehenſive; they chiefly enter into (what is yet, alas, too little regarded) the ſpirit of this divine command, *judge not*; their treaſure is in heaven; their hearts are uniformly bent towards the advancement of righteouſneſs, and they

they live for the good of their own times, and the generations to come.

In a few words—poverty in ſpirit, unruffled by pride, perſeveres patiently in every undertaking, and is therefore a moſt invaluable quality. *Univerſally* invaluable, for it furthers either the uſeful occupations of menial labour, or the diligence that waits upon the higher arts up to the ſublimeſt reſearches of the human underſtanding; and thus whilſt it unqualifies for no one noble action, it accords with, it aſſiſts, and not ſeldom conſtitutes the nobleſt. The man too that is poor in ſpirit is eaſily conſcious of ſin, and ready to ſorrow for it, is as ready to reform from the evil of his way.

It is from the light of life and experience, it is from our own boſoms and familiar obſervations, that we derive the beſt and moſt awakening comments upon the great chriſtian precepts. And when our knowledge has been thus advanced, it is then that religion (which has began) completes the good work by her ſuperior directions and diſcoveries, her divine authority, motives, and examples.

May ye be perfectly delivered from pride, and therefore fear it as your ſubtleſt and worſt foe, and conſider it as an inſinuating and fiery ſerpent wound about your hearts with ſo many folds, that it will require more than all your human ſtrength to become free from its deſtructive graſp. But ſorrow not as men without hope, uſe all your human ſtrength, it is not ſmall, and is alſo the gift of God, and then for your perfect deliverance look up with the eyes of petitioning piety to the Father of all mercies, and with the eyes of faith to the croſs of Chriſt, which was elevated for our ſalvation; and when man that has but a few days to live has learned to be lowly, even as the eternal Son of God was lowly, then ſhall wiſdom be juſtified in this her ſaying—*Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

SERMON

SERMON III.

MATTHEW v. 4.

Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.

CHRISTIANITY, it ſeems, would have us cultivate a little ſorrow, as a means of rejoicing, that we may not incur a great deal as a conſequence of inconſiderate joy. I cannot but conſider the mourning, to which a comfort is annexed, as the godly ſorrow which is *choſen* in order to righteouſneſs; or that ſerious temper implied in ſuch chriſtian precepts as enjoin us to *watch, and work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling*; that delicacy and tenderneſs of holy caution which maintain the prevalence of reaſon and enable

enable us to ſhape conduct aright, and to ſave innocence by caution, or reſtore it by repentance.

The man of this world, in the very outſet of his opinions and aims, flies from ſuch a mourning; he is very ignorant of its nature; he fancies a ſpectre, and ſtarts at it, and is driven by folly into miſery. He would *ſeize* joy, and it is only to be *won*. A certain exertion intervenes between the deſire and the poſſeſſion. I muſt be ſuppoſed to ſpeak only of the joy which is fit, and permanent, and worthy of man. It is a *comfort* to them only who *mourn aright*.

I ſhall endeavour to ſhew firſt, reſpecting the various kinds of ſorrow, what is, and what is not the godly ſorrow; and laſtly, to convince you, that diſmal as this duty may ſeem upon a ſlight view of it, and through the medium of the prevailing manners, there is indeed no form of comfort and joy in this world equal to what accompanies the humble and contrite ſpirit.

Grief is a paſſion to which we are naturally inclined, and however indolently we may give way to it, as if it were really ſome good, we muſt

muſt ſtill acknowledge it to be an evil. Grief therefore, as grief, is not eligible, and it were folly to *ſow in tears* without the proſpect of reaping a larger meaſure in joy.

Reſpecting the paſſion of ſorrow, it is eaſy to ſee when by the neceſſity of nature we admit, and cannot but admit it. Chriſtianity exhibits man as an imperfect creature only not in the laſt ruins of his nature, and propoſes to his practice no proud impoſſibilities. As chriſtians we are to govern our ſorrows as we can, and receiving from our divine Lawgiver his general decrees, muſt apply them in particular inſtances with our beſt diſcretion. Sorrow ſometimes will immediately maſter us, we yield becauſe we cannot but yield to it. Thus our Saviour himſelf wept over the dead body of Lazarus; he wept over it at the very inſtant he was about to recal it into life. The preſent image of a dead friend, the anticipated image of that friend ariſen from the dead, the preſent looks of the old companions, and beloved ſiſters, expreſſing probably one ſentiment of a petitioning tenderneſs, of an ardent and awful expectation, and the certainty

tainty that this was to be ſoon changed into the moſt extatic expreſſions of joy, of which we only can form the moſt diſtant conception, but which the *divine* Jeſus could perfectly preconceive, were circumſtances that overpowered (and no wonder) his benign ſpirit, and this conſummate model of all perfection *wept*. Thus a hard heart is for ever precluded from glorying in its inſenſibility, and the tenderneſſes of nature are hereafter to take their place among its ornaments: be it ſo, but let us not ruſh from inſenſibility into madneſs, nor when the torrent of ſorrow threatens deſolation omit to collect all the force of reaſon and religion to ſtem its deſtructive progreſs.

Sorrow then is either neceſſary, and irreſiſtible, and therefore blameleſs, or an emotion eligible for its good conſequences, and when choſen meritorious. It is of ſuch a ſorrow alone that our divine Maſter can ſay, *bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.*

Sorrow in all other inſtances interferes with our duty to God, which is, "reſignation to "to almighty power, acquieſcence under in-

"finite

" finite wiſdom, and confidence in perfect " goodneſs." * And how can we thus grieve, and not injure to a certain degree our neighbour? He claims, according to his relation, certain kind offices at your hands; will you then manacle them with ſorrow when they ſhould be active in kind ſervices? Sorrow is not ſeldom the death of activity; and the heart which is benumbed with grief cannot glow with the ardours of beneficent love. Fear and indolence, envy, diſcontent, and ill-temper, uſually form the retinue of worldly ſorrow. But by ſuch a ſorrow a man fondles a fatal viper in his own boſom, and unnaturally ſins againſt himſelf. It is, in ſhort, an indolent and unmanly ſelf-deſertion, injuſtice to one's fellow creature, and impiety to God. It is only not the worſt degree of ſuicide; and whilſt it diſqualifies us for the duties of life, either plunges or draws us prematurely into the gulph of death.

But let us now examine the nature of that mourning which entitles us to a bleſſing, and conſolation.

* Borrowed ſomewhere from Dr. Samuel Clarke.

The

The religion of Chriſt commands us, in a certain ſenſe, to mourn, as it alſo commands us to rejoice always *in the Lord.* Therefore the rational chriſtian compares the two precepts, and reconciles them by conſidering the ſorrow which is enjoined him as nothing very terrible, and yet very neceſſary. Viewing it as a general, and not occaſional temper, he eaſily reſolves it into a conſtantly ſerious attention to duty, into that ſobriety of mind which always keeps the eyes of reaſon open; he notes its proper effect, a good conduct, and its agreeableneſs to the nature of a thinking and provident being; he notes the conſequent joy of an approving conſcience, and its accompaniment the hope of increaſing good; he takes account of God who is love, whom he is *ſtudious* to pleaſe; and that he may not lean too far towards the line of ſorrow, he encourages himſelf to rejoice, aware that he rejoices in the Lord: and thus by the conſtant cultivation of chriſtian ſerioufneſs and cheerfulneſs, he preſerves his ſoul in that perfect equipoize which is the moſt productive of human comfort and virtue. But when the man of this world (in whom the imagination and

and paſſions predominate) is commanded to mourn, he may hear indeed, but he does not underſtand the precept; he does not ſurvey it as expanded into practice, and productive of its peculiar fruits: he aſpires, inſtinctively as it were, after joy, with an ignorance of its beſt forms, and the method of procuring it, and therefore naturally rejects a duty ſo offenſive (by being miſunderſtood) to his habitual ſentiments. But let us examine whether it is rejected upon any better ground. Godly ſorrow includes all the degrees of religious mourning, which, in the manner we judge beſt, when we judge *conſiderately*, muſt be adapted to particular occaſions.

If there is any degree of ſorrow, however ſmall, which is in all men a duty, upon that let us now beſtow our chief attention, for in that we are all concerned.

The ſorrows of perſecution willingly incurred for the ſake of truth, and the penitential agonies of the moſt flagitious ſinner, are inſtances of miſery to which all men have not occaſion to expoſe themſelves.

But there is a ſmaller degree of chriſtian mourning which I conceive to be an univerſal duty,

duty, and of this I ſhall endeavour to ſhew the neceſſity, nature, and advantages.

This degree of godly ſorrow is, in other words, a godly ſerioufneſs of ſpirit, in which a degree of ſorrow muſt ever be felt until the world ſhall no more abound in troubles, or man in ſin and infirmity. And I muſt think it a peculiar duty in this age to recommend a virtue, the chriſtian cultivation of which, might have prevented moſt of the follies which deform, and of the miſeries which diſtreſs it.

That this godly ſorrow thus defined, is the univerſal duty of man upon a principle of nature and reaſon, will appear (I truſt) if the following aſſertions are founded in nature and reaſon.

I conceive that every man who ſeriouſly reflects upon himſelf as man, is apt to think himſelf ſomething worſe than he was originally deſigned to be; that he is ſomething very noble in ruins; that he is ſurrounded with many perils which ſuggeſt a cautious conduct, and that he muſt ſuffer many evils the moſt oppreſſive, ſhould they not be ſoftened by patience, and ſuſtained with fortitude. That

he

he traceth in himſelf certain hints and ſymptoms of an excellency which he cannot now diſplay, and a deſire after more happineſs than he can now acquire; that he is tending to death, and yet afraid of dying; aſſociating with that event ideas of, I know not what, pains and horrors, confuſedly mingling, with a dread of ſeparation from well known friends and delights, an anxiety which in vain explores that unknown region beyond the grave; and unable to ſuppreſs all conceptions of duty, he is ſenſible at the ſame time of the greateſt difficulties in diſcharging it: he is continually conſcious that reaſon ſhould rule, and that paſſion is rebellious with an alarming degree of ſtrength.

Such in general, are probably, the thoughts of man when he ſeriouſly thinks upon his condition—but ſuch thoughts will naturally induce a mourning poverty in ſpirit; if ſo, ſome may reply, let us not then *think* at all, but rather let us ſay—*come on, let us enjoy the good things that are preſent, and let us ſpeedily uſe the creatures as in our youth, let us fill ourſelves with coſtly wine and ointment, and let no flower of the ſpring paſs by us; let us crown ourſelves*

with roſebuds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of voluptuouſneſs, for this is our portion, and our lot is this. Who tells them ſo? Reaſon; ſurely not—for the advice is irrational, and one might as well be governed with the brute beaſt by mere inſtinct. And have the ſoldiers of voluptuouſneſs any cauſe to exult under her ſtandard, and in her uſual trophies? A waſte of hereditary honours and property, an abuſed or ruined intellect, an infamous name, a diſeaſed body, an entailment of diſeaſe upon the innocent, upon the unborn, the ſale of patriotiſm and honour, grey hairs without wiſdom and dignity, youth indocile and immodeſt, all the horrors of impiety, diſhonourable death, the fatal madneſs of the duelliſt and the ſuicide; I ſpeak not of the ſcene beyond the grave, it is enough to hint at it—theſe are the triumphs of voluptuouſneſs. O that man, formed for thought, would *conſider his ways*, and ordained rational, take advice of reaſon! It is very true indeed (cry the prudent votaries of ambition and avarice), that if a man ſeriouſly thinks upon his condition in this world, he muſt naturally ſorrow as often as he thinks upon it, and therefore to

avoid

avoid ſorrow, we, for our part, will not think at all upon it, nor yet expoſe ourſelves to the miſeries of voluptuous thoughtleſſneſs; for we will reſtrain thought within the ſober purſuit of wealth, or the dignified purſuit of power. Theſe reſolutions too are brought into act, and what are the conſequences? the change or oppreſſion of empires, moral and intellectual merit deprived of their influence and honour, vile arts and diſhoneſt frauds practiſed and rewarded, ſimplicity and genuine dignity diſcountenanced, heroic faculties and worth ridiculed and perſecuted, mere decencies admitted in lieu of ſolid and effective virtues, all the cautions of the coward, all the diſputes and oppoſition of pride and ſelfiſhneſs, factions and rebellions, war in all its forms, and the leſs noted but more extenſive evils of anxious and inhuman avarice in the more retired ſcenes of life, where alſo the luſt of power multiplies miſery, and tortures (however imperceptibly) its numerous victims into a premature death: thus ſociety ſuffers from the grave ſinner, and from iniquity ſoberly conducted. And to the guilty individual himſelf, are the courſes of avarice and ambition the paths of pure

pleaſantneſs and peace? No; he *ſtrains at a gnat, and ſwallows a camel:* he breaks the gentle band of chriſtian ſerioufneſs, and then groans upon the ground beneath the harrowing anxieties of this world.

The votaries of worldly care and worldly voluptuouſneſs, have been conſidered only as different inſtances of vanity and miſery: they are each the worſhippers of a paſſing pageant, and are each but manacled by the different links of one oppreſſive chain, whoſe iron often enters equally into the ſouls of both. It matters not whether we think not at all, or proſtitute thought, whether we neglect or miſuſe this invaluable talent, excepting that by the neglect, we only imitate the brute beaſt, but by the abuſe, the rebellious devil and his aſſociates. Let him then who gave us the power of thought, appoint its courſe; and him that gave us paſſions, determine their regulation.

Ye that are here preſent upon your chriſtian duty, will aſſuredly conſider the following words as the words of God—*Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*: when ye

ye know that God has promiſed the comfort, ye confidently expect it, and readily leave to him the manner and the time.

When ye fully conſider in its ſeveral lights the mourning that is godly, ye clearly perceive that this ſorrow has its accompanying joy, and (with meekneſs) a certain inheritance even in this earth.

The day will come when the preſent paradoxes of the chriſtian (as they now ſeem) will appear to be the concluſions of genuine wiſdom.

Chriſtian ſerioufneſs is founded upon a juſt apprehenſion of things; and God himſelf hath ſaid, that they who mourn ſhall be comforted.

Therefore the martyr paſſeth through death, it may be a death of tortures, with that heroic power which is moſt able to ſnatch the ſting from death, and the victory from the grave.

Therefore the mourning penitent is diſfranchiſed by reformation from the moſt abject ſervitude into a liberty the moſt glorious, into the liberty of the ſons of God; and therefore chriſtian ſerioufneſs hath its peculiar comforts, and deſerves them.

This virtue is of neceſſity united with many other virtues. This angel preſides over one component ſtar of a conſtellation—borrowing and repaying luſtre. She is in union with humility, meekneſs, and charity; ſhe is in union with piety and juſtice, with fortitude and faith; ſhe teaches a part of that evangelic character which cultivates whatſoever is lovely and of good report. Ye cannot conceive her intemperate, or to poſſeſs ſuch an attachment to the glories of this world, as to ſacrifice real magnanimity to ideal greatneſs. Thus ſeen, and thus aſſociated, ſhe preſents herſelf to our view in all her genuine grace and beauty. She is in manners the immediate parent of ſimplicity, truth, and tenderneſs; ſhe gives to ſpeculation a tendency the moſt beneficial, and to action, an exertion the moſt humane; ſhe is the cordial aſſiſtant to the pureſt love and the moſt ingenuous friendſhip; the moſt exquiſite productions of the human mind owe their *true* finiſh to her inſpiration; and it is her hand which chiefly fixes that throne of all the virtues, *Conſtancy*. The brighteſt colours of generoſity want their perfection till ſhe has blended

blended them with her ſober tint of modeſty, and the ſudden luſtre of extraordinary glory and proſperity ſtrikes harſhly, and glares upon obſervation, till her chaſtening veil overſhades it. It is her privilege, juſt enough, to expect evil, as either to prevent or receive it with the leaſt poſſible perturbation. Her's is really the ſober ground on which the lines of adverſity appear leaſt ſtrong and tragical; and (it may be added) that while ſhe prunes off the miſchievous exuberances from worldly joy, ſhe deprives irreſiſtible ſorrow of its ſevereſt ſting, its moſt fatal venom; for if ſhe precludes us from ſome temporal gratifications, ſhe precludes us alſo from their preſent and future ill conſequences.

To conclude—ſhe dictates a well founded and rational, a religious and ſafe conduct, preventing hopes that are needleſs, and purſuits that are vain; and juſt enough clouding the falſe ſplendors of this world from our view, as to urge our undiſtracted deſires towards the glories which are genuine, which are eternal.

To perfect her praiſe, ſhe inſpires us with that rational and religious character of mind

which moſt unites us with God; which, if it be ſome ſorrow reſpecting this world, is all joy reſpecting a nobler ſcene of things; which, if it be indifferent to the treaſures of a ſhort period of *time*, has the art however of ſecuring the riches of all *eternity*.

SERMON IV.

MATTHEW v. 5.

Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the earth.

A Man is pleaſed if his inferior, equal, or ſuperior with whom he has, more or leſs, any concern is meek, and can then ſee and *feel* too, that meekneſs is a virtue; but upon a *general* view of this amiable quality, becauſe it is ſeldom an accurate one, he is not ſo ready to commend it, nor ambitious to be called, or really to *be* meek as the means of advancing his temporal intereſts, or *inheriting the earth*. And perhaps it may not be the means of that condition which *he* accounts proſperity, as it is probable that he may

may *follow the multitude to* think *evil*, rather than the few wiſe who take advice of reaſon, and not imagination. For it is the office of reaſon to correct momentous miſtakes, but eſpecially this ſervice is expected from the ſuperior light of Revelation, as methinks it was done in a very important inſtance when the divine Teacher ſaid, *bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the earth.*

Yet perhaps (as ſome have thought) the earth to be thus inherited, is the *new earth* (mentioned by St. Peter) *wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.** But we are prohibited from dwelling much on this interpretation by the very

* *Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.*
2 Peter iii. 13.

This was not only the opinion of the reſpectable and ingenious Mr. Norres, but avowed to be ſuch, with exemplary candour, in conſequence of the ſupport which had been given it by Dr. Burnet, in his *Theory of the Earth*, which he had peruſed after he had publiſhed his excellent ſermons upon the Beatitudes, in which he maintains the uſual explanation of the text: *(vide Appen. to Mr. Norres's ſermons on the Beatitudes)*. Dr. Samuel Clarke, as will appear from his following paraphraſe of the beatitude in queſtion, entertains ſome idea reſpecting the new earth as the portion of the meek. "Bleſſed "are

very term righteouſneſs, as this imports either juſtice alone, or all virtue; beſides had this been the meaning of our bleſſed Lord, it would have wanted that admirable appropriation of the reward to the virtue which diſtinguiſhes the other beatitudes. It ſeemed his object to meet

" are thoſe who are of a meek and gentle, a quiet and harm-
" leſs ſpirit; free from paſſion and violence, from haughtineſs
" and turbulency: for ſuch men ſhall generally be ſecured in
" the quiet poſſeſſion of their rights in this world by the pecu-
" liar providence of God; or however ſhall have an inheri-
" tance in that new earth wherein peace and righteouſneſs are
" for ever to dwell." Obſerve that the word *peace*, a very material one, is added to the text.

Dr. Whitby's note upon this text ſeems ſingularly judicious, by which it appears that the ancient commentators had often, and amiſs, in his opinion, by the earth underſtood heaven, as being eminently the *land of the living*. But he ſays, "The
" bleſſing promiſed to theſe meek perſons is this, that they ſhall
" inherit the earth; that theſe words are taken from Pſalm
" xxxvii. 11. and that it is evident to a demonſtration, that
" David did underſtand this of the preſent earth, or of the
" land of Canaan, &c. It is therefore well obſerved," adds Dr. Whitby, "by Chryſoſtom upon the place, that becauſe
" the Jews had been often taught this leſſon in the Old Teſta-
" ment, our Saviour addreſſes himſelf to them in the language
" they had been accuſtomed to."

The learned and elegant commentator Maldonatus, in his note upon this beatitude, ſpeaks to the following purport:—Chryſoſtom, Theophylact, &c. underſtood *this* earth, *by the earth to be*

meet with a corrective dignity the prejudices of that age, and of men in all ages; and he foreſaw that *the new heaven, and new earth*, a ſyſtem of manners productive of the utmoſt terreſtrial as well as celeſtial felicity, would never be brought forwards till he had taught men

be inherited, ſince Chriſt is wont to promiſe earthly as well as heavenly rewards: vide Matt. vi. 33. But Origen, Baſilius, Cyril, Jerom, &c. (probably the ancients alluded to by Whitby) underſtand that the term earth ſignifies heaven. And as this earth is ſuch a ſcene of miſery to the meek, adds Maldonatus, I the rather lean to the latter interpretation; but when preſſed by the term *earth*, he ſupports himſelf, ſtrangely methinks, by ſaying, that it is probable our Saviour, for the ſake of variety of expreſſion, called that *earth* in this beatitude, which he had called *heaven* in the firſt. But our Saviour, it is to be reverently believed, was above this light attention to rhetorical arrangements, and as he was then addreſſing a generation the moſt remote from meekneſs, and who were by their ferociouſneſs to become his crucifiers (as he then well knew), and from the folly of their angry paſſions (which he equally foreſaw) were by the coming horrors of their national cataſtrophe, to teach all ages a leſſon, which he *then* ſaw they would too much need, I mean the *unprofitableneſs of wrath for the inheritance of the earth*—he ſpoke *plainly*, what methinks, may be eaſily underſtood by thoſe who will conſult their common ſenſe, and conſider a little what paſſes in the world, and at what time and to whom it was ſpoken by him. The caſt of my diſcourſe upon meekneſs was, I ſcarcely know how, taken from the comment of Eraſmus, upon the beatitude under conſideration,

men effectually the nature and the rewards of thoſe primary but neglected graces which he crowns with his *bleſſing*. What he then ſaw himſelf, and we behold through the eyes of hiſtory, of the pride, and levity, and ferocity of the bigoted Jew, who muſt have *deſpiſed*, what

ſideration, which I ſhall attempt to tranſlate for the ſake of my unlearned reader.

This exquiſite writer having conſidered the preceding beatitudes as paradoxes to the world-bewildered mind, and therefore as new inſtructions to be expected from the divine light that was come into the world, obſerves, that the bleſſed Jeſus now brings forwards another paradox like the preceding, and ſays, *bleſſed are the meek*, &c. But who are the meek? "They "who injure none, who injured are quick to pardon, pre- "ferring a loſs to contention, and peace to ample revenues, "peace and poverty to riches and ſtrife. They are ſpoiled of "their own, and ſo had rather be, than ſpoil another man. "This ſurely then is a new method of enlarging poſſeſſions, "when *yielding* meekneſs is aſſerted to gain more than the "*ſpoiler* Rapine: but this ungentle and furious robber *poſſeſſeth* "not what he *hath*, whilſt the placid mind which rather ſur- "renders its own, than *battles* for them, poſſeſſes an eſtate "wherever it enjoys an evangelic neighbourhood. But why "thus limit the privileges of the *mild*, whom the worſt of "men are apt to favour more than they do the *inhuman*, who "are univerſally deteſted? Grant that the former has loſt his "earthly treaſures, great is ſtill his gain, *even the ornament of* "*a meek and quiet ſpirit*," *which is in the ſight of God* (who beſt knows the value of every thing) *of great price*. 1 Pet. iii. 4.

"Evangelical

what we do not *honour*, meekneſs as the means of *inheriting the earth*, duly called forth his authoritative declaration, that it *did* inherit the earth, but he left them who had *ears to hear* to prove his aſſertion, by examining not only the nature of meekneſs itſelf, but alſo of temporal

" Evangelical tranquillity is cheaply purchaſed by the loſs of " all temporal poſſeſſions. And if all are loſt, ſo much the " more ſhall the meek inherit thoſe celeſtial treaſures which " abide for ever. The exile, driven from one ſpot of earth, " is vulgarly accounted miſerable, but Chriſt pronounceth " them bleſſed, who thus exiled on account of his goſpel, are " enrolled the citizens of heaven. It is true that they are " thruſt out from the right of one city, from the tender en- " dearments of one home, of one country; but the whole " univerſe is the country of the evangelic man; and the pious " man will at length rejoice in that manſion which ſhall be " his own for ever, and in that country whoſe protector is " Almighty God."

Qui nam ſunt mites? qui nulli vim faciunt, qui læſi facile condonant injuriam, qui malunt rem perdere quam contendere, qui pluris faciunt concordiam et animi tranquillitatem, quam latifundium: quibus optabilior eſt quieta paupertas, quam noxiæ divitiæ. Sed hoc hominum genus ſolet ſuis agris deturbari, tantumque abeſt ut aliena ſibi parent, ut avitis etiam poſſeſſionibus pellantur. Sed hæc eſt nova dilatandæ poſſeſſionis ratio, ut plus impetret ab ultro largientibus manſuetudo, quam per fas nefaſque paret aliorum rapacitas. Immitis ac ferox dominus, nec hoc poſſidet quod habet: placidus autem qui mavult ſua cedere, quam pro his digladiari,

temporal proſperity. We therefore cannot better employ ourſelves than by purſuing this courſe; and if it ſhould iſſue in our conviction that the meek ſhall inherit the earth, we have herein a proof of the divine benevolence, in the *eaſineſs* of this divine commandment.

Meekneſs and patience are the virtues peculiarly requiſite for the preſervation of the mind from the diſcompoſure of grief and anger: but if theſe virtues ſolely reſpect ſelf, are unqualified by generous, nor dignified by holy views, they degenerate each into meanneſs. For theſe virtues have their bounds: a man owes a debt that muſt be paid to himſelf and his neighbour; he muſt not (for inſtance)

gladiari, tot locis habet fundum, quot locis reperit amantes evangelicæ manſuetudinis. Inviſa eſt omnibus pervicacia: manſuetudini favent et ethnici. Poſtremo, ſi perit poſſeſſio miti, damnum non eſt, ſed ingens lucrum. Periit ager, ſed incolumi trauquillitate animi. Magno cum lucro vendidit fundum, qui vitavit tumultum, et ſervavit animi quietem. Poſtremo ut omnibus excludatur mitis, tanto certior eſt illi cæleſtis terræ poſſeſſio, unde depelli non poterit: mundus ut infelices deplorat, qui pulſi patria, ſolum vertere coguntur, ſed Chriſtus beatos pronunciat, qui ob evangelium exulant, cælo municipes aſſcripti. Excuſſi ſunt a jure civitatis unius, ejecti domo, profligati patriâ, ſed evangelico viro totus mundus patria eſt, et piis certiſſima domus eſt, patriaque ſecuriſſima.

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invite additional evils upon himſelf by a ſordid meaſure of patience under human inſult and injury, nor by the ſame baſeneſs, though it were for his own intereſt in this life, encourage, by ſelf-proſtration or abject ſubmiſſion, a miſbehaviour which may injure other men, he muſt proteſt againſt it, and firmly too, or he betrays the cauſe of mankind; he need not retaliate, he may return good for evil, and he does in proteſting againſt it; for the injurious themſelves are ultimately injured by them whoſe paſſive meanneſs ſuffers ſin to continue upon them without any check of remonſtrance. This is a bribe the moſt diſhonourable, and a ſervitude the moſt debaſing, and whoever creeps into proſperity through this ditch, for ever bears about him the marks of his unſeemly courſe. Man, in ſhort, is to be patient only to a certain degree, yet ſo far as he is duly patient he is converſant with the virtue which peculiarly enables him to repoſe himſelf in peace, and a deliverance from ſorrow. Patience therefore has the dignity of withholding us from an impotent reſiſtance, and a grief productive of no fruit: it is only not a ſtate of proſperity, is the modeſteſt form of victory,

victory, and *retreats* with mild compoſure, whilſt meekneſs neither retreating, nor yet advancing, preſents itſelf with a *defenſive* dignity adequate to its fierce aſſailant Anger. It is alſo with patience a modeſt though a majeſtic conqueror: but as patience preſuppoſes a *preſſing* evil, and ſhews itſelf in calm endurance, it cannot be ſo happy a condition of mind, as when the meek man holds at a *diſtance* the evil which he reſiſts, and therefore lifts himſelf nobly *above* it, rather than calmly acquieſces *under it*. Meekneſs ſeems a reduction of reaſon into its beſt frame, or an inſtantaneous rallying of its beſt powers, for then ſurely its faculties ſeem in their moſt awakened ſtate, and the *madneſs* anger is fumed off by the energy of their efforts. It is often ſeen to hold forth the ſhield of reaſon in *every* direction, and then man is in his greateſt attitude, for he then does the beſt things with the leaſt parade, magnanimouſly brave by repelling the fury Anger, and truly generous by repelling it in the moſt inoffenſive manner, "bearing," as the great philoſopher* ſays, "with modera-

* Ariſtotle.

" tion accuſatory calumnies and contempt,
" repreſſing his revengeful and angry paſſions,
" preſerving his mind calm and placid, and
" delivering himſelf from all the auſtere and
" irritating emotions."

But if this deſcription of meekneſs (as is to be expected) is true, ye readily infer from it, that the meek man lightens by patience that evil of calumny and contempt which he cannot prevent, but however prevents all the horrors of his own vengeance (that peſt which ſhould be ſtayed on the threſhold) and all the pangs of his own rage, enriches himſelf with the poſſeſſion of a compoſed and placid temper, and rejoices in the conſciouſneſs of a reſcue from all vexatious emotions. So far then ye muſt conclude, that this man purſues the moſt promiſing way to temporal felicity, and that from no inability of meekneſs to aſſiſt him in the inheritance of the *preſent* earth, we need have recourſe to the deſtruction of the latter, or his own reſurrection from the dead a thouſand years before the day of judgment: and whatever may be the deſign of the benevolent Creator, our preſent habitation and his law are ſuch proofs of his benevolence,

benevolence, that if his *eaſy commandments* were univerſally obeyed, we ſhould become the *new creatures in Chriſt Jeſus*, able to renew the earth into a ſecond paradiſe; which would not then be leſs the means of our happineſs from not being conſidered as an *abiding* place, but as a ſmall veſtibule to the glories of eternity, or as the *beautiful* porch to the temple of heaven, to which the ſaint would not be pointed merely by the hand of holy Hope, but led through it a willing and indeed *exulting* captive.

The utmoſt proſperity is the utmoſt gratification of our deſires, but in the nature of things, it is requiſite for our good upon the whole, that our deſires ſhould be ſo regulated by reaſon, that they ſhould be ſuch, and in ſuch degrees as to be probably gratified, and that without the conſequence and price of greater counteracting evils. But reſpecting either a future life or the whole of the preſent, it is not now doubted after the experience of ages, that the utmoſt gratification of deſires is only to be expected by him who brings them down into ſuch a moderate ſtate, as to preclude the probability of diſappointment;

and then, but not till then, he is in a ſtate of proſperity. He has no intermediate line to take, and therefore as this is proſperity, we do not only ſee its nature, but at a glance of intellect, the ſubſerviency of meekneſs to our temporal good, which will farther appear when we take account *chiefly* of Solomon's ſentiments on this virtue, conceived at a time, and in a place when virtue was chiefly upheld as the means of temporal proſperity.

We are commanded to *ceaſe from anger*, nor *to fret* ourſelves *in any wiſe to do evil*; yet we may be *angry*, if we *ſin not*, but however only ſo far angry, that the *ſun may not go down upon our wrath*, for it is added with an emphatical inſinuation, that if we do not, we *give place to the devil*. And why? We then harden anger into hatred, and prepare the ground for malignant vengeance. But conſider hatred and vengeance as inmates, and is it not then a *diabolical* poſſeſſion? Is it not an inward rack? View them expreſſed in the countenance, how deviliſh! In outward acts, it is hell on the earth. Is not then the earth better inherited without them? We are ſo far from being allowed the more ferocious expreſſions

preſſions of wrath, that the *ſpirit* is forbidden to be *provoked ſo as to ſpeak* unadviſedly *with the lips*. Unadviſedly, and therefore the powers of reaſon muſt be preſerved entire, for *anger reſteth in the boſom of fools*: and therefore we cannot wonder that it *worketh not the righteouſneſs of God*. And as *the Lord is at hand*, in the ſenſe of his omnipreſence, as well as in his diſpenſations of death and judgment, it behoves us now to practiſe this *moderation*, for we cannot pleaſantly inherit this life, if we provide not for a future ſtate. Beſides, can we *now* reaſonably enjoy ourſelves, if we diſregard our proper decencies, and lay aſide the wiſdom which becomes man? But he who is *haſty of ſpirit exalteth folly*, and no wonder, for then he produceth its bittereſt fruit, by *ſtirring up ſtrife*. Wiſe and experienced men the longer they live, grow in opinion, that ſtrife is the quinteſſence of folly, bad in itſelf, uſually an unneceſſary evil, and productive of the worſt ill conſequences. Therefore a man from being *furious, aboundeth in tranſgreſſion*: but it is the tranſgreſſion which turns upon himſelf, and ſtings him,

and there is ſo *little hope in this fool*, that he ſhall *ſuffer puniſhment*, and if *thou deliver him, thou muſt do it again*. Surely then he doth not inherit the earth by *delighting himſelf in the abundance of peace*. So impetuous are his ſteps, that he is for ever falling, and he ſhakes till he is all paralytic, and his anger becomes ſomething more than a *ſhort* madneſs; or having no *rule over his own ſpirit*, he is like *a city that is broken down, and without walls*. But meekneſs walls us about with defenſive ſtrength, and he *that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city*. But why is he better? Becauſe he knows how to exalt himſelf without abaſing his fellow creature; becauſe he wins a more difficult victory, and becauſe he is wiſe to ſeek the beſt happineſs, and at the ſame time, that which he can give to himſelf; and therefore acts inoffenſively reſpecting other men, with all the dignity, without the parade of an independent ſpirit, and rejoiceth more in the one exquiſite and melodious applauſe of approving conſcience, than in that obſtreperous chorus of glory, in which

which he hears too often intermingled the jarring ſhriek of miſery, and counteracting hiſs of envy. Shall we doubt then whether the meek man inherits the earth, is *now* happy? If his happineſs depends upon being the voluntary cauſe of making others happy, he muſt rejoice in his meekneſs, knowing, ſeeing, and feeling its delightful influence upon other men with whom he has any concern. If he is meek upon this principle, and watches the effects of it, he will gather continually new encitements to grow in this grace, and acting from this nobler motive, will be but the more pleaſed when he perceives the conſequent increaſe of his *perſonal* happineſs, the advancement of which was not his *primary* object.

But after all—there is no undue ſelf-deſertion in meekneſs, which is thus, and I think, well deſcribed by an ancient commentator, "The meek are not they who are never "angry, for ſuch are fooliſh and inſenſible, "but the meek are they who are the maſters "of their anger, and can diſcloſe or conceal "it when, and in the degree they judge

" proper."* And that there can be no meanneſs in meekneſs, muſt be admitted by the diſciples of him who ſtill ſays to them, *learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in ſpirit.* No perfect example, with reverence be it obſerved, were any of his recorded actions inconſiſtent with meekneſs. But there is a very ſuperior, indeed the utmoſt imaginable ſpirit, and majeſty in many of them: but ſurely in all of them he ſtill appears moſt rational and righteous. Therefore his example inſtructs us never to loſe ſight of reaſon, but always to preſerve this governing light in its utmoſt purity, power, and luſtre.

For if this light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is the darkneſs!

The moſt heroic dignity of manners, the utmoſt fortitude, zeal, and charity, are conſiſtent with meekneſs. Lowlineſs and meekneſs have not uſually been expreſſed in the conduct and deportment of men: there is therefore the utmoſt propriety, nobleneſs, and

* *Theophy. Mites autem ſunt, non qui prorſus non iraſcuntur: tales enim inſipientes ſunt et inſenſati: ſed qui iræ vim habent, continent autem, et quando oportet iraſcuntur.*

charity

charity in our bleſſed Saviour's reference of our imitation to the milder features of his conduct. Meekneſs and humility are moſt wanted in human life, as they are ſtill moſt miſſed. They are in a great degree fundamental to other virtues. And if meekneſs was the predominant colour of our Saviour's conduct, if in his arduous, buſy, and perſecuted life, it could find its moſt frequent place; if this *man of ſorrows* could thus admit it ſo continually, men in general will find in their ſeveral lives as much ſpace (though not ſo *ſevere* occaſions for it), and by entertaining it, will preſerve the authority of their reaſon over their paſſions and imagination, and experimentally come to know, that meekneſs is a virtue of the moſt genuine dignity, and not the leſs ſo on account of its unparading appearance. It is indeed the virtue peculiarly conducive and preparatory to the ſublimer qualities, to the more ſplendid, and active exertions of man. For he who in the matters of ordinary occurrence has always ruled his ſpirit, and been compliant with the direction of his leader, Reaſon—will find himſelf previouſly trained and exerciſed to obey that

that leader, to ſtand ſtill, retreat, or advance, quicken, or retard his movements when he is engaged (as every man muſt ſometimes expect to be) in the ſeverer ſtruggles and contentions of life.

The following ſtatements, if true, will enable us to determine how far the meek are in the beſt way to inherit the earth.

So far as our angry emotions (which in a greater or leſs degree reſpect God, our neighbour, and ourſelves) are productive of evil—meekneſs, their regulator, is preventive of evil in proportion as it regulates them. If the diſpenſations or diſcoveries of God are not altogether ſuch as we may wiſh, or fancy they ſhould be, meekneſs ſteps in, and reaſonably ſays, *it is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* It thereſore ſuggeſts the right and candid temper which takes due account of evidence, and indifferent to every thing but truth, readily ſees, and owns God in his works and in his word. Thus the many evils of doubt are precluded, and the bleſſings of faith are the fruits and the *rewards* of meekneſs. This is ſurely one method of *inheriting the earth.* Acquieſcence in the will

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of God, that rock upon which the fabric of contentment beſt ſtands, is in a great meaſure derived from this amiable virtue.

Reſpecting our fellow creatures, meekneſs is the ready prompter of thoſe words, manners, and actions, which *turn away wrath*, which prepare a way for the charity, that by returning good for evil, *heaps coals of fire upon the head* of an enemy, melting away the droſs of his ill humours, and leaving in him nothing but unallayed good nature. Meekneſs ſecuring a wall of ſeparation between anger and benevolence, ſets the latter at liberty to purſue all the means, and diſcover all the motives favourable to forgiveneſs, mercy, and kindneſs. Anger is a painful agitation of mind, is additionally evil by confuſing its operations, and when extreme, by diſordering the body itſelf. It alſo draws a gloom and damping atmoſphere over life, by the little peeviſhneſſes and ill-humours which are more eaſily felt than perceived. It is all a fog, and depreſſes you, and you know not how to ſtrike it *off*; or if it does not demoliſh happineſs with the force of a ſtorm, an inundation, and a tempeſt, yet falling drop by drop, it gradually wears it away.

away: ye are not upon your guard to reſiſt it, nor have accordingly prepared your buildings and your mounds. But peeviſhneſs is a form of anger, for it is the anger of cowardice; meekneſs therefore by preventing all forms of anger, preſerves the individual from tormenting himſelf, and in that temper, ſtate, and conduct, which moſt favour every agreeable and reſpectable exertion, and procure in the largeſt meaſure, the good-will and confidence of mankind. Meekneſs therefore inherits the earth, unleſs ye ſhould truly think that anger is a better inſtrument to procure favour and confidence, reputation and wiſdom. Anger is the ſtrong and ſharp ſword which haſtily cleaves aſunder the bond, the *cable* (I will ſay) of intereſts and affections that binds men to men, and nations to nations.

But after all, the completeſt conception of meekneſs muſt ariſe from the review of our Saviour's conduct in thoſe abundant paſſages of his life wherein this virtue predominates. Nothing upon record is extant that more than theſe merits our ſtudy for the purpoſe of moral delight, or improvement; nothing that more perfectly exhibits and demonſtrates the utility

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of meekneſs to wiſdom and charity and the advancement of our human dignity as beings capable of rationality, fortitude, and juſtice. But the Redeemer's condition, ſo peculiar, allows us not, it may be, to ſee in him the profits of meekneſs reſpecting his perſonal happineſs, at leaſt not immediately. He came into the world to ſave ſinners, upon the principle of reſigning glories and felicities, and he could not, it ſeems, have ſupported his character as the Saviour, have advanced his pacific deſign, been the example he wiſhed for our ſake to be, nor taught us a due indifference to the things of this world, had not his conduct been, as it was, ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed by ſufferings, as well as the meek endurance of them.—The *profits* of his conduct are in truth chiefly ours. It was beneath him to aim at earthly felicity, he was ſoon to be ſet down at the right hand of God, and to reſume the glories and felicities which he had *meekly* reſigned on our account.

But doubtleſsly conſidered as man he *muſt* have derived ſatisfaction and comfort from his meek behaviour. Conſidered as man he was replete with the quickeſt ſpirit of diſcernment,

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the profoundeſt wiſdom, a temper the moſt humane and generous, and all the awful and amiable ſenſibilities of a pure, holy, and juſt nature. But what, I pray you, were his uſual companions, his boſom and familiar friends the Apoſtles? How inferior to him, how dull, unbelieving, and blemiſhed with worldly paſſions and prejudices! Surely then, as man, he would have been continually diſturbed with anger, and debaſed by the expreſſions of it, and puniſhed by the conſequences of an angry demeanour, had he not continually adorned, and armed himſelf with the crown and helmet of meekneſs. He paſſed unſhattered, for he was not even ſhaken by this perpetual ſtorm.

He towered above all mankind in wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and with a ſenſe of right proportioned to his rectitude. None were ſo perſecuted by human folly and malice: yet in his worſt moments of perſecution he could reſiſt the tempeſt within, the boiling tumult of a generous anger and a moral reſentment. But then in thoſe moments he *muſt* have found a profit from his meekneſs which outweighs

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an age of ordinary proſperity, for he muſt have felt himſelf already winged by deſert and hope for a ſuperior place and ſociety; he muſt have ſo leaned upon himſelf and God as to ſmile at the impotence of man. Little could the Scribes and Phariſees with all their authority, and wit ſharpened by all their malice, intimidate and confound the bleſſed Jeſus: he governed his own ſpirit, and thereby ſunk theirs as far beneath his as earth is beneath heaven. He *muſt* have ſecretly rejoiced, in as much as his triumph was the triumph of virtue. But the powers of hell are again at work, the moſt formidable tempeſt of all is now coming on, Jeſus, alone and deſerted, appears before the menacing majeſty of the national tribunal, but there he ſtill appears meek and lowly, and ſo far is aſſuredly the maſter—the conqueror of his enemies. But how long ſhall he continue ſo? *Crucify* him, they cry aloud, *crucify* him, be his blood upon us and our children. He is crucified—ignominiouſly expoſed upon the croſs between two thieves—he is then, even *then*, reviled and taunted. He is excruciated with great agonies

agonies of pain: he muſt ſurely now be overcome:—very far from it—*Father forgive them,* he ſays, *for they know not what they do.*

I believe that ye are now fully apprized of the beauty, the dignity, and the bleſſedneſs of meekneſs.

SERMON V.

MATTHEW v. 6.

Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.

YE humble, ye mourners, ye meek, (methinks the Saviour ſays) who by freedom from ſecular deſires, levities, and contentions, are *now* qualified for a clear diſcernment and ardent purſuit of righteouſneſs, become as "concerned to walk blameleſs in "all the commands of the Lord, as is the "hungry perſon to have meat, or the thirſty "to have drink,"* for ye ſhall be filled. Ye thus *hungry* ſhall be *filled with* theſe beſt *good*

* Dr. Whitby's paraphraſe upon the text.

things, when *the rich* (who are not poor in ſpirit) ſhall be *ſent empty away*. Therefore *every one that* thus *thirſteth* aright *come ye to the waters* of ſalvation; *and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without* any adequate *price* paid by you. Whereas the wicked *ſpend money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not*, but *hearken ye diligently unto me, and ye ſhall eat that which is good, and your ſoul ſhall delight itſelf in fatneſs*.*

If it is a matter of fact, that without taking account of heaven, righteouſneſs is its own reward on earth, we have the more reaſon to thank God for his *eaſy* law. And if the letter of the beatitude before us aſſerts only *the profitableneſs of godlineſs in things temporal*, why ſhould we deprive virtue of this divine eulogium, or mar the appropriated elegance of the ſtatement, by ſuppoſing an *inſinuation* of thoſe eternal rewards which are elſewhere introduced in their happieſt places? And as if the Jew in our Saviour's day had been

* Iſaiah lv. 12.

acquainted

acquainted with all the ſubtle diſputes of an after period upon the topic of juſtification, the righteouſneſs, now the ſubject of divine benediction, is divided with a *ſcholaſtic* formality* into the *inherent* and *imputed*. By the former is meant our own beſt exertions to be virtuous in union with the ſupplicated aid of the Holy Spirit; and by the latter, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt accepted as our's. But although righteouſneſs† may elſewhere bear this ſenſe, and we may in this age well and wiſely ſay, bleſſed are they *whoſe meat and drink it is to do the will of the Lord*, and to obtain through faith the benefit of his redeeming ſacrifice; yet, I think, that if upon this preſent occaſion we now were to conſider righteouſneſs in this latitude, we ſhould deviate widely from hiſtoric truth,

* Vide Dr. Hammond's practical catechiſm, page 89. 8vo edit.

† Theophylact went into the other extreme, as the following paraphraſe will ſhew, and it is alſo a curious ſpecimen how the moſt venerable minds ſhould be fearful of intruſting their imagination.

Quandoquidem de miſericordia dicturus eſt, oſtendit primum ſervandam juſtitiam, et eleemoſynam non ex rapinâ dandam. Porro juſtitia omni cum alacritate exercenda eſt, quod ſignificat cum dicit

 eſurientes

truth, nor duly confine ourſelves to the text which is before us: therefore I ſhall only take advantage from it to conſider righteouſneſs in its ordinary ſenſe as all virtue, and the neceſſity of cultivating it with *the utmoſt deſire* in order to be filled with it.

Unimpaſſioned intellect, or mere reaſon, however neceſſary to *deſign*, cannot *perfect* thoſe habits, and that one courſe of conduct which conſtitute righteouſneſs. Let us not then ſo reſt in good principles as not to foſter theſe ſeeds into good actions. Righteouſneſs, which is a collection of all the virtuous habits in act,

eſurientes et ſitientes. Quoniam autem avari quidam abundantes eſſe videntur, et ſaturati: dicit quod juſti magis etiam hic ſatientur, quia propria ſecure poſſident.

i. e. Our Saviour muſt now diſcourſe upon juſtice, becauſe he is going to ſpeak upon mercy, and will thereby inſinuate, that mercy is inconſiſtent with rapine. But if this is the meaning, the text amounts to this and no more—earneſtly cultivate juſtice, and you will be filled with juſtice. Now a man may be very juſt, and very wicked in other reſpects, but underſtand righteouſneſs as all virtue, and the text amounts to this—aim *ardently* to be the beſt of men, and you will renew in you the image in which God made you. But the chriſtian thus aiming, of courſe ſupplicates for the divine aſſiſtance, and leans upon the divine ſacrifice, walks humbly before God, and glorifies him for his natural as well as ſpiritual gifts.

preſuppoſes

preſuppoſes our utmoſt exertion to acquire them. But deſire precedes labour, and labour attainment; and if the object of the attainment amounts to a righteous character, our deſire ſurely ought to be as great as we can poſſibly make it. For though there is a point of character when a man may be numbered among the righteous, yet it will be a part of his *then* character to ſee that he is then but advanced upon a certain line in which he ought to proceed, and ſtill to proceed when time ſhall be no more. But in order to love an object we muſt know it, and it muſt be lovely, and we muſt prove its exiſtence as well as perfections.

It is not decent here, or any where (after the lapſe of ſo many enlightened ages), in the convivial circle, or the ſolemn aſſembly of the devout, or alone (for God is always preſent, and the dignity of human reaſon is always to be ſupported), to debate whether there is a right or a wrong. Their nature and their difference have been ſo aſcertained, that it ſeems an arrogance the moſt deteſtable, a ſcepticiſm the moſt unphiloſophical, a littleneſs of enquiry the moſt unmanly, a contempt

of ancient authority the moſt irrational, and an indifference to human intereſts the moſt inhuman to reſiſt the deciſions of all ages and nations, the moſt uniform deciſions of the reaſon, and common ſenſe of man upon an article the moſt obvious to ordinary apprehenſion: it in a manner tells *itſelf*, ſo graciouſly has God aſſiſted man in the diſcovery of his law. Light and darkneſs are not more different than right and wrong; right is the luſtre of action, and wrong its ſhade; and you as eaſily acknowledge the exiſtence of right as you do the exiſtence of the ſun when you ſee the ſun ſhine; your corporeal and your intellectual eye may not ſee them, or may ſee them imperfectly in certain inſtances, but theſe inſtances are eaſily known to be but *particular* diſqualifications: general deſcriptions of faculties are not to be founded upon ſuch as are in a maimed condition.

If righteouſneſs or virtue is not now known, the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apoſtles, the renowned ſages and poets, when poets were *ſages*, the ſuperior orators, hiſtorians, and legiſlators of all ages, however diſunited in time and place, have been equally ignorant

or

or perfidious in a matter the moſt important. But is it probable that God has thus left his will or law without a witneſs, and therefore left the other viſible proofs of his exiſtence but as ſo many nugatory facts, or as ſo many cruel means to perplex us? Or is it probable that theſe famous luminaries of the world have alike combined to impoſe a ſimilar falſhood upon their fellow creatures, and to dreſs it out (with all the *inimitable* enthuſiaſm of parental affection, if I may not ſay, with the moſt awful warmth of devotional zeal) in a garb which one muſt think could have been contrived only for the exhibition and decoration of a truth the moſt believed, the moſt beloved, and the moſt adored? I ſpeak not of the countleſs multitude ſo eaſily duped in an article, upon which every man may and *muſt* make continual experiments, which will ſuggeſt the truths that are deducible from them. A madman may examine the light of the ſun till it blinds him, and ſo it is with the intellectual eye when directed by a pertinacious vanity. Self-evident truths are as the light of the ſun; and the diſtinction between right and wrong is ſelf-evident, if as it has

been often ſaid (and I think often proved), there is a *moral ſenſe*, and that the beauty in action is as ſoon ſeen as in things material.

And is it not? For inſtance, a child that cannot reaſon, ſcreams at the hideous appearance of a human viſage trembling, burning, and flaſhing with rage and fury, but ſtretches out its little arms to fondle upon the breaſt of one who regards it with the ſmiling and ſparkling eyes of benevolence; it ſprings forth towards the heartfelt *beauty* of benevolence.—But I mean not to loſe myſelf in this agreeable and extenſive ſubject.

The neceſſity of *hungering and thirſting* after righteouſneſs, together with its attractive excellency, will, I truſt, appear from the following obſervations.

We are in a ſtate of trial, and therefore cannot wonder that we are proved by diſagreeing tendencies, that we have evil inclinations to encounter, or that (as it is appoſitely and compendiouſly expreſſed by holy ſcripture) *the fleſh warreth againſt the ſpirit*. The world without is *always* abundantly fraught with the means of alluring us from duty. But the forms of temptation vary: for

for inſtance, in the ruder ages men are ſeduced into acts of inhuman violence; ſuperſtition then is often aggravated with horrors, and magnanimity polluted with blood; the ingenuous arts have no reſting place; the conſolations of permanent property are not known; the change of empires is rapid, and human bleſſings (what Solomon ſays of wealth) paſs away with the wings of the eagle. Men are then *viſibly* ſtigmatized by the moſt flagitious acts, or diſtinguiſhed by a virtue ſo reſplendent as needs not the ſurrounding darkneſs to illuſtrate its glory. But vices in thoſe ages are not ſo various as in the more poliſhed periods, and the *art* of ſin is then leſs extenſive: it aſſails man openly, and does not undermine him; it is not the ſlow ſapping of a fever, or an aſſaſſin in the dark, for its menace is open, and excites violence to repel violence, and not fraud to counteract fraud.

Virtue, as a ſyſtem of habits contrary to others too agreeable to us, implies a continued ſtate of warfare: we muſt ſtill *watch* till death cloſes our eyes, and aſſigns us to that final judgment which pronounces us vanquiſhed or victorious. Can it then be ſaid truly

truly that righteouſneſs is its own reward? Comparatively ſpeaking we may aſſert that it is, enabled, as I think we are, to prove that unrighteouſneſs is its own puniſhment, and that its evil follows it of neceſſity, and not by accident. There are accidental evils which befal righteouſneſs; but is there any evil appertaining of neceſſity to righteouſneſs which is not *equally* ſo to unrighteouſneſs? If the fleſh warreth againſt the ſpirit, doth not the ſpirit war againſt the fleſh? Is the victory of the former more delightful than that of the latter? Do its trophies increaſe as we grow older and nigher to death, and become more and more intereſted in futurity? And if men ſometimes perſecute righteouſneſs, do they never oppoſe unrighteouſneſs? What is infamy, what is civil puniſhment? I mention not the ſevere tortures of a diſapproving conſcience.

And now ſuppoſe all men righteous, and the deſign of chriſtianity accompliſhed, and you ſee righteouſneſs baniſhing every evil in the world. What, pain? Yes, every form of pain reſulting from every form of miſconduct. Sorrow? All the ſorrow which is greatly afflictive

afflictive and *worketh death*. What, Death itſelf? No, by no means—righteouſneſs thanks God for this diſpenſation, and gently lays her hand, in God's good time, upon this key which opens the *gate of glory*. In ſhort, ye cannot imagine one comfort, one accompliſhment, one embelliſhment of human life, which the advancement of righteouſneſs would not advance, no not *one*, ſo profitable is godlineſs in things temporal. It *may* be demonſtrated, it *has* been repeatedly demonſtrated.*

We may indeed require a divine prophet to tell us *when* the madneſs of man ſhall recede to the wiſdom of God, and *duſt and aſhes* become obedient to *omnipotence*, and the kingdom of righteouſneſs be ſeen on the earth; but reaſon itſelf can demonſtrate what will be *then* her retinue of felicities. And now ſuppoſe unrighteouſneſs univerſally prevalent; and will its wide dominion detach from its ſubjects the uſual effects of their vices? It

* Barrow, Tillotſon, South, and Sharpe excel upon this topic: South in his firſt ſermon—Sharpe in his ſecond—Tillotſon in many of his leading ſermons—and Barrow in his firſt, ſecond, and third.

will

will increaſe them, it will turn earth into hell, and God for his glory muſt again open the *flood-gates* of heaven, and cover the everlaſting hills beneath the ſea of his wrath.

But let us conſider what righteouſneſs is. It is a life of teachable humility and ſerene moderation, of healthy temperance, dignifying purity, and heaven-aſpiring hope reſpecting *ourſelves*; it is nobly juſt, heroically brave (witneſs the holy company of Martyrs), angelically mild and courteous, merciful and benevolent in the cauſe of our *fellow creatures*. I ſay *angelically*, for ſurely theſe virtues in the chriſtian riſe ſo high above the ordinary practice, as to appear more than *human*. The righteous man feels that he lives, moves, and has his being in God, communes with him, and is at peace; reſolves his will into the *divine*, finds it at length an eaſy effort, and is regenerated with a joy unimaginable in its *extent* but to ſuch as are like him: and thus connected with perfect wiſdom and goodneſs, ever-preſent and ever-powerful, he is *never leſs alone than when alone*, and yet finds the joys of ſociety doubled, and its evils only not annihilated; he ſees God in all that is good,

and

and flies from evil into a nigher communication with the fountain of power and happineſs; he has not many deſires, and not one generous hope, ungratified; and by thus uniting the creature with the Creator, has found the art of glorying in himſelf without pride, and of reſpecting the thing made for the ſake of the maker; he is the genuine pupil of holy Faith; he poſſeſſes *at leaſt* contentment on earth; he ſees with ſatisfaction his impriſoned body moulder into ruins, and Death at hand to diſlodge his immortal ſoul; and ſuperior as heaven may be to his beſt merits, he conſiders the merits of his *Saviour*, conſidering them perfects his conception of the divine benevolence, and takes a triumphant account of his coming eternity.

In ſhort, righteouſneſs includes every action that wiſdom has uniformly praiſed and common ſenſe invariably loved: praiſed and loved for a certain peculiar and ſuperior beauty, and a very manifeſt conduciveneſs to advance human happineſs as far as it can be advanced by human action. This we may affirm to be the general concluſion of reaſon, probably therefore a concluſion agreeable to truth and experience.

But

But if the fleſh warreth againſt the ſpirit, it may be ſaid too, that the ſpirit (an unſurmountable part of our conſtitution) warreth againſt the fleſh. But in time, the latter may ſo prevail over the former, ſo engroſs the habits on its ſide, and ſo ſmother intellect in ſenſuality as to ſtifle the ſeverer remonſtrances of moral conſcience: ſtill however the wicked man muſt ſuffer the uſual effects of wickedneſs; let him be ever ſo ſtupified and imbruted as to the apprehenſions of what is right, he muſt ſtill pay the appointed tax for being wrong; he muſt be painfully laſhed by the expectation, and by the foretaſte of a worſe condemnation; and if he doth not now condemn and deſpiſe himſelf, ſtill however the dire ignorance which he has criminally brought upon himſelf will not exempt him from the ill-conſequences of contempt, and condemnation from his fellow creatures; will not operate upon his body as a charm againſt the diſeaſes of intemperance; will not medicine his mind under the anxieties of avarice, ſuſpicion, and envy; will not afford a ſoothing palliative during the feverous fits of wrath, revenge, and cruelty; dart the rays of hope on his gloomieſt hours of diſcontent

content and ſorrow; build a bulwark around him to repel the reſentment of man, or invigorate him with the ſhield of fortitude at the advance of death.

Still however it is certain that we cannot win the prize of our high calling, unleſs we *ſtrive* for it. Grant then that righteouſneſs is a labour, a conflict—can we ſay that it is its own *puniſhment?* No; this labour has its attendant joy in the conſciouſneſs of the beſt advancement, and the hopes of the moſt perfect reward. It is a glorious career continually cheered on with additional conqueſts, for every evil habit overcome is a citadel of the enemy demoliſhed, and every new virtue acquired is the acquiſition of a new kingdom, of *a new paradiſe*. Still, ſtill however the fabric of righteouſneſs is to be erected and piled up, glory upon glory, at no ſmall coſt of erection, with all the addreſs of ever-watchful wiſdom, with all the ſpirit of the nobleſt ambition, and with all the dint of the moſt relentleſs fortitude: heaven itſelf muſt be aſſailed with continual prayer, and heavenly aſſiſtance be continually fetched down from the throne of grace by the fervors of genuine

genuine faith. But remember that the fabric of righteouſneſs is the only edifice that we may and ought to attempt to build up until it reaches the heaven of heavens—but remember too that the higher we advance the eaſier is our toil, the fairer our proſpect. In the mean time the ſinner is all the while (as it were) working downwards, till the ground of his vain aſſurance ſinks beneath him, and he falls into that abyſs of miſery, and plunges into that horrible ſociety where the terrors of the divine juſtice ſo diſplay themſelves that ——— But a glance of our thoughts at this outer darkneſs, this out-lying region of penal miſery, is enough to deter man from unrighteouſneſs, and to wing his approbation, his deſire, and ardent love, towards the beauty and the rewards of righteouſneſs.

For however righteouſneſs is its own reward, it is another, and as juſt, and it is a more affecting view of righteouſneſs when we behold her expanding her regards and effects into eternity, and preſenting to our view the ſociety of *angels and good men made perfect*, when we behold her (ſeen already in a light ſo amiable, ſo beautiful, and ſo reſpectable) arrayed at length

length in the robe of chriſtian piety, crowned with the diadem of heavenly hope, and exulting under the wings of that *angel of the new covenant* who has at length appeared among us *with healing in his wings*; who may be conſidered himſelf as repreſenting righteouſneſs, and thus addreſſeth us to the end of time: *Come unto me all ye that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls, for my yoke is eaſy, and my burthen is light.*

SERMON VI.

MATTHEW v. 7.

Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy.

WE cannot hear theſe words, and not be impreſſed at once with an awful and delightful reverence. We ſhudder at the thought of not finding mercy here and hereafter, conſcious that man has occaſion for it, more or leſs, in both periods of his exiſtence. But when we receive this exhortation to mercy from the compaſſionate Saviour of mankind, we receive it, though with a greater degree, yet with that kind of delight and complacency, as when a very good man adviſeth us to do that which he recommends alſo

alſo by his own beautiful example. For although a reaſonable inſtruction ſhould as ſuch command our utmoſt acceptance, yet it is too natural to withdraw ſome confidence from the leſſon, when the teacher teſtifies by his own miſconduct, how little reſpect for it he himſelf has. Therefore whatever charms accompany modeſty, and however truth may not in general want any other ſupport than the ſerene majeſty of a well-ordered and perſpicuous exhibition, and although the utmoſt liberality of mind in man is his utmoſt anticipation of the angelic character, yet it is ſo neceſſary that the religious teacher ſhould at once *ſeem* as well as *be* ſincere, that in mercy to his diſciples of every deſcription he muſt not ſo far force himſelf out of his *honeſt* bias, as to appear ſo cool, and tranquil, and addreſsful, as to incur the ſuſpicion of inſincerity: he muſt be cautious not to betray his *doctrine* from his amiable endeavours to *adorn* it, nor when he wiſhes *to be all things to all men in order to ſave ſome*, to be ſo accommodating as to incur the hazard of making little impreſſion upon any. It is manifeſt that in *mercy* to mankind we are *now* to guard againſt theſe

refinements, nor ſhould leave the beſt intereſts of our fellow creatures in the hands only of an honeſt, but narrow-minded fanaticiſm; for what greater object can we poſſibly have in view, than to combine with the preſent liberality of ſentiment the revived piety of the primitive ages? It is ſurely a deſign worthy man, and an aim of the utmoſt mercy, to endeavour to fix the human character in the firſt form of dignity and beauty. If theſe are not *piety* and *charity*, where elſe ſhall we look for them? But it behoves us to view the ſubject more *generally*, and before I conſider certain objections to the exiſtence or indulgence of mercy as a paſſion, and take ſome view of its nature, it ſeems proper to premiſe a few remarks on this holy truth, that *the merciful ſhall obtain mercy*.

Sinleſs obedience to God could not entitle us to an eternity of happineſs, but this is promiſed to *beſt-endeavouring and penitential* man, through *his* merits who *mercifully* died for our ſalvation. Therefore *heaven* itſelf is appointed us upon a principle of *mercy*, and not of *juſtice:* nor is it to be doubted that the merciful man is in the beſt way to *find mercy* in

in *this* life. For even if a merciful diſpoſition is *pitiably* accompanied, and of courſe miſgoverned by weakneſs of intellect, ſtill the man is beloved, and uſually finds a return of compaſſion in his hour of diſtreſs. This indeed is not the ſtate of perfect retribution, ſtill however it muſt rarely happen that a merciful father, huſband, brother, maſter, or friend, ſhould in his day of ſudden poverty, ſorrow, or ſickneſs, miſs the attentive conſolations of his neighbour. He has however provided the beſt he can to procure them, and if his paſt kindneſs is not duly returned, he has but to *ſcrutinize* his heart, and finding that virtue had performed her office, and is ſtill at hand to perform the like if opportunity ſerves, he cannot know thoſe excruciating agonies which muſt harraſs the unmerciful man under ſuch a viſitation.*

The bed of ſickneſs is only not the lot of all men as much as the grave itſelf. But what

* He ſcrutiniz'd his noble heart,
Found Virtue had perform'd her part,
And peaceful ſlept the chief.

Sir Han. Williams's epiſtle to Mr. Pointz.

comfort in the former has the mercileſs man to expect from them to whom he has ſhewn no mercy, to them upon whom he is then *awfully* dependant, and to whom not to have ſhewn mercy was to have done the moſt atrocious injury? *For if any do not* thus provide for his own, *and ſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel.** Horrible is the condition of man, when he is in the utmoſt dependance upon human mercy, and yet when from a ſort of bluſhing and tardy neceſſity it is tendered, if tendered at all, to him, he muſt receive it with ſullen ſhame, or abject meanneſs, or reproachful horror. A wiſe man would wiſh to provide for ſuch a day of weakneſs all the conſolatory ſtrength of recollected virtue, and would ſhudder, by a ſeries of *little* cruelties, to commit himſelf in as much ſin as they who are guilty of *one* capital and flagitious act of cruelty, and to incur the *rack* of the *mind*, which is far worſe than that of the *body*, to which the others are in ſome countries condemned.

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

So

So then it ſeems that you are to be merciful for the ſake of *obtaining mercy*, and mercy therefore is an act of ſelfiſh prudence: it is certainly a *very* prudent act in the *very* beſt ſenſe of prudence, but it is not therefore a *ſelfiſh* one, unleſs it is entirely and unjuſtly referred to ſelf. It is no defect in a virtue when it at once ſerves yourſelf and your neighbour; it is no proof that the practice of ſuch a virtue ariſes not entirely from a benevolent motive, becauſe it may terminate in your good as well as in that of another man; and as you as well as that other man are *equally* the children of God, it is matter of pious expectation as well as gratitude, when his law takes equal account of you both. It is therefore at once a proof of an ungracious nature, as well as frivolous underſtanding in him that would derive a conduct from the *leaſt* honourable ſource, when he cannot prove that it does not originate in the *moſt* honourable. But ye will look higher than man before ye will deny the exiſtence of benevolence in the human heart. For ſhall we think, that when *in the beginning* God himſelf blazed out in the work of creation from the impulſe of pure benevolence

(for to conceive any other motive is a moſt pernicious *error*), that he allowed not one ray of this virtue to brighten the ſpirits of his intelligent creatures, and that he ſtill ſits enthroned amidſt his univerſe, and its magnificent diſtribution of habitations for the reſidence only of myriads of myriads of ſelfiſh intelligences? Believe me that God is not in his thoughts, or any thing god-like, in his heart, who thus reaſons, and from irreverence to the Creator, thus libels the creature.

The paſſion of mercy is conſiſtent with ſelf-love, but is diſtinct from it; it looks ſimply, directly, and without any ſelf-reſpect, in innumerable inſtances, at the object of its healing tenderneſs. Mercy can ſeldom pauſe to calculate, and wait the deductive proceſs of prudence, ſhe is a winged virtue, and flies to her point as we *imagine* angels to do; witneſs the cherubic choirs of undeſigning and tender-hearted infants, which form a large part of her retinue, and the ſtill larger aſſemblies of women, in whom the *ſentimental* part of the ſpecies rather than the *prudential* abounds. And ye ſee men too of all ages relieving that form of diſtreſs to which they cannot either themſelves

ſelves be expoſed, or have any fear of incurring. When nearly *all* this nation roſe up with one throb of mercy, in prayer and hopes to aboliſh the ſervitude of the poor negroes, was it from any fear that the petitioners themſelves were liable to the ſame misfortunes which they pitied in the diſtant African? Or are the abundant ſupporters of our *charity-ſchools* thus importantly beneficent, from an idea that they may probably ſtand in need of ſuch a benefaction? But too many words have been laviſhed upon thoſe who can thus coolly butcher the human character, and to countenance, it may be, what is *monſtrous* in themſelves, can thus traduce a whole ſpecies with all the accumulated effrontery of paradoxical pride. And is this, this the return for the goodneſs of a *rewarding* God, whoſe *eaſy commandments* are vilified in *general*, becauſe, it is too probable, a *few* of them are not *at firſt* ſo eaſily obeyed as prevailing vice may *require*, or prevailing vanity *imagine*.

It is manifeſt that the merciful act, originating *only* in ſelfiſh views, would be ſo circumſcribed, that the medicinal *atom* would periſh out of our ſight, and be almoſt nugatory in its effect.

God

God has taken better care of us by giving us *bowels of mercy*, and providing for the abundant forms of diſtreſs, the ſeminal, the ſeparate, and independent principle and *paſſion* of benevolence, of which mercy is at preſent the larger part, not only having need to *weep* abundantly *with them that weep*, and to perform this obvious duty, but to aſk of conſideration to point her *preventive* courſe, and aſſiſt her in her equally neceſſary, more uſeful, and more difficult work of laying thoſe foundations which may prevent evils, and contriving thoſe magnificent deſigns which the ages to come ſhall review with gratitude and applauſive admiration; emulous, it is to be hoped, of adding to the ſtructure of beneficence, till it ſhall reach up to the heavens themſelves, not to bring down the Almighty to *confound* (for this is not the work of pride), but to perfect and to bleſs it, and finiſh the *kingdom* of the *compaſſionate* Jeſus, by annihilating the need of mercy, and leaving benevolence no exerciſe but that of *rejoicing with thoſe that rejoice*.

And now, unpleaſant as the change of ideas may be, harſh and grating and diſcordant in the higheſt degree to the preceding, let me beſeech

beſeech you, juſt after this general view of mercy, to conſider how man is dependant upon it. Every condition of life is accompanied with its peculiar evils, and therefore has a demand upon pity, would we comfort one another and mutually confer and contribute to make the beſt, as brethren, of this our *one* place and houſehold. Not to loſe ourſelves in a view too wide, we may ſee at a glance of recollection, that men not only in all the external conditions of life, but in the ſucceſſive periods of it, are expoſed to evils the lot of each period. For what is more pitiable than the wants of infancy, unleſs it may be the immoral dangers to which thoughtleſs youth is expoſed, unleſs it may be the certain cares which oppreſs manhood, or the infirmities of declining age, when life-wearied man is faſt returning to that more deplorable, but leſs pitied helpleſſneſs with which he made his firſt entrance into this region of ſorrow? In ſhort, human life itſelf is as ſomewhat that ſays, pity me in all my forms and periods, for I am to be ſuſtained by pity, or to be a word of reproach, and a term expreſſive of miſery, till I melt away into the boundleſs ocean of eternity.

Do

Do ye doubt the truth of this aſſertion? Do ye think that I have expreſſed myſelf with too much warmth for the occaſion? Ye ſhall then judge for yourſelves. Suppoſe then, that at this inſtant and for ever, all mercy was totally baniſhed from the hearts of man. Parents then, I ſay *parents themſelves* (oh! dreadful conception!) would immediately conſider their poor helpleſs wanting children, as a burthen upon their remorſeleſs cruelty. The ſtrength of man would then exert itſelf in a brutal tyranny upon the weaker woman, accurſed to bear the more than ſlaviſh yoke of matrimony beneath his abſolute unmitigated power—but what will be then his ſituation on the bed of ſickneſs, when the wife without pity is to tend his declining health, or the pitileſs ſervants are called upon to adminiſter comfort to one who never knew to comfort them? It were needleſs, as well as painful to enlarge upon the ſituation of old age, when man and nature unite at once to heap its miſeries, and to daſh its helpleſſneſs into the grave. From the ſuppoſition of man thus become mercileſs ye may deduce the importance of the virtue, and the neceſſity of

reſiſting

reſiſting any ſentiment, opinion, or principle which tend to diminiſh its influence on human conduct.

Manifold indeed are the evils of this life, and it would become a ſtate of puniſhment, and not trial, but for the exertions of mercy. This ſentiment is implanted, more or leſs, in every heart, and is ſo generally a human ſentiment, that it is *properly* called *humanity*. And therefore the virtue is ſo dear to man, not on account of its effects only but congeniality with his heart, that men (it is well ſaid by the profound philoſopher*) do not only *praiſe* the merciful, but *bleſs* them. Hence the ſentiment of mercy has appeared to ſome ſo very powerful, and therefore ſo apt to exceed and afflict the compaſſionate themſelves, that until philoſophy was brought to the ſtandard of reaſon or nature by Chriſt, and taught a little more humility and wiſdom than what had uſually diſtinguiſhed the ſelf-elected maſters of mankind, ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſages made a formidable attack upon mercy, as a paſſion; and yet, it muſt

* Ariſtotle.

be

be owned, ſupported the practice of it with admirable powers of a generous eloquence at leaſt, and not ſeldom by the generoſity of their lives,* and founded their principles upon piety and benevolence. They took account of Deity, and were ſo far from denying the exiſtence of mercy as a paſſion, that they dreaded its force as too great for its end, unleſs ſo curbed by reaſon as only not to be annihilated. Therefore their opinions were not ſufficiently agreeable to nature and truth; they enjoined a conduct (however excellent) which was impracticable, for it was a merciful conduct, and yet the *paſſion* of mercy was to be ſuppreſſed; a man was neither to *feel* for himſelf or his neighbour. They aimed at too much, and therefore injured the cauſe they loved, and becauſe reaſon would not have the heart as ſoft as a ſpunge, they would have made it as hard as the rock upon which this excreſcence is formed; they erred indeed, but they erred nobly, nor countenanced any opinions which leſſened the duties of piety,

* Witneſs the amiable Brutus, and the equally amiable Marcus Antoninus.

or

or debaſed the dignity of man: their religion was not adapted to the general caſt and powers of the human mind; ſtill it was the nobleſt effort of *uninſpired* man, it was the immediate emanation of magnanimity, it was a generous averſion from the Epicurean laxity of principles and manners, it was calculated for great, and generous, and brave ſouls, to enable them to reſiſt the tide, when running high, of an univerſal corruption, to break through the ſnares of a debaſing voluptuouſneſs, to ſuſtain the vigour of heroic labour and enterpriſe, and manifeſt the tranſcendent majeſty of virtue. Their writings had then, and may have now, their uſe, for they then aſſiſted, however unknowingly, the cauſe of chriſtianity, and will not now *unſeaſonably* cooperate with that ſuperior wiſdom and authority, in reſcuing us from what is little in manners and debaſing in deſires: in ſhort, whatever might be the defects of this ſchool, we ſtill review ſome of its diſciples as the firſt of mankind, and are animated to manly virtue by the very ſound of names ſo aſſociated with the ideas of heroic conduct. Their court, it is true, was the court of the *Gentiles*, but it

was

was not far from the temple of *Jehovah*. But as they outſtretched character beyond the proportion of nature, their ſublime conceptions ſurpaſſed the common ſympathy, and afforded the Epicurean ſneerers *(a never-dying order)* the means of ridiculing them, and alluring the greater part of mankind from thoſe hard *taſk-maſters* who enjoined the *brick*, but knew not how to ſupply the *ſtraw*, whoſe wages therefore were ſmall, and of ſuch a nature that men could not eaſily apprehend their value and deſirableneſs. They bade you follow nature, and yet miſtook it; they ſummoned you to a difficult warfare without exhibiting adequate motives, or allowing the requiſite uſe of paſſions; they propoſed impracticabilities, and teſtified to all ages the neceſſity of ſuch a teacher as Chriſt Jeſus, who came to rectify nature and not deſtroy it; who, as the *divine* Teacher, was qualified to *command* obedience; who, as the appointed *Redeemer*, made that obedience the means even of everlaſting happineſs; who, for inſtance, when he commanded us to be merciful, allowed the exiſtence and uſe of that generous paſſion; and when he promiſed that the merciful

ſhould obtain mercy, ſuggeſted every motive that could reaſonably induce us to copy his own benign example.

Would we all indeed be his diſciples, walking in the light of his humane law, and after the ſpirit of his humane conduct, we might appropriate to ourſelves this his conſolatory farewel to his apoſtles: *let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God; believe alſo in me. In my Father's houſe are many manſions.* This, in truth, is our conſolation againſt *unmerciful* man. But if God ſo loved us as in *mercy* to give his only Son for our ſalvation, we then know, had we not been expreſsly told, what *manner of ſpirit we ought to be of* one towards another; and our perfectly merciful Lord herein at once cheers us under the want, and animates us to the practice, of mercy. Oh! heavens, what is man! fallen indeed, ſince it has required ſo many chriſtian ages, I will not ſay to repair, but to cleanſe his ruins, and to remove the rubbiſh which, from the *monitory* deluge, ſo many contentious and warring ages had heaped around them, and inveſted them with *foreign* horrors! The example, and the words of Chriſt and

his apoſtles, and their ſubſequent age, bearing freſhly in their followers the humane colouring of that which preceded it, could not ſubdue the power of cruel ſelfiſhneſs. Even now, with all our boaſt of charity, we bear about us but a dim tint of primitive humanity: but how ſhall we recover it? By the recovery of primitive piety. And now conſider the Lord of Glory at this inſtant our merciful mediator at the right hand of God, and let the proudeſt man contemplate that lowly act of mercy, his appearance in our form, and imagine, if he can, whether he himſelf has the heart to practiſe any act of mercy to his fellow creature ſo lowly as this; and then let him open the ſacred code of compaſſion (I need not otherwiſe title the *evangelic* goſpel), and ſee what a lucid, familiar, and attractive comment upon it was made by its divine author: ſurely his heart will burn within him when he hears Jeſus thus ſpeaking, and he will be warmed into the deſire of copying ſo conſummate a pattern. When beauty, and authority, and the Saviour, and the Judge of man, are thus combined, it ſhould beſpeak a reſiſtleſs influence; but it is ſtill reſiſted, becauſe I fear

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me that thus *charity* languiſhes for the want of *faith*, and yet am aſtoniſhed that Faith doth not haſten there, to that Bethesda, which this *angel of the new covenant* has ſo touched, as to render it a healing mercy to *all* the ſorrows of man; the perfect purifier of his ſins and his miſeries.

Mercy ſo created the goſpel of Chriſt, and it is ſo arched all over with this beautiful bow of peace, this eternal proof of the divine goodneſs, and goodneſs is ſo much *divine*, that what is ſo godlike muſt be the work of God, and therefore it ſo beſeeches, enjoins, and commands us to be merciful, that we muſt *hunger and thirſt after* this *righteouſneſs*, or be inſenſible to the moſt attractive perſuaſions, or impiouſly defy the moſt awful menaces and terrors of the Lord God Omnipotent.

SERMON VII.

MATTHEW v. 8.

Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.

REASON itſelf might advance ſo far in its diſcoveries, as to think that the pure in heart would be the likelieſt to commune moſt with God. Purity in heart ſeems the laſt iſſue of moral excellency, or the crowning effect of moral cultivation; leſs it cannot be when it is conſidered as *the* purity of heart which is the object of *divine* benediction, and then it muſt import the utmoſt rectification in habit and principle which the human character admits.

It

It has occurred to pious men, in a ſtate of nature to qualify themſelves by the greateſt purity of manners for the apprehenſion of divine truths, and the neareſt communication with Deity of which man is capable: things ſpiritual, ſaid their reaſon, unaided by divine revelation, could not otherwiſe be apprehended and reliſhed; nor the independence upon things material, which allure the ſenſes, miſlead the imagination, and ſeduce into vicious practice, be otherwiſe effected. Therefore the greater and nobler minds, aiming at the trueſt ſelf-enjoyment and perſonal dignity, at tranquillity of life, and independence reſpecting the capricious and intractable humours of mankind, and their almoſt univerſal injuſtice (for which there has been ever more ground than for a merely *poetical* complaint),* have ſought the means in purity of heart. This, in other words, is innocence, which is the moſt cheerful condition of mind, and when united with a mature judgment, really gives entrance to more and ſuperior enjoyments, with leſs inconveniences and abatements, than

* *Terras Aſtræa reliquit.*

ariſe from ſenſual indulgences.* But the doctrine of purity taught by reaſon, and carried occaſionally into practice beyond the bounds of propriety, from the abuſe of reaſon, and the miſinterpretation of religion, receives its perfect ratification and deſcription in the laws of Chriſt, whoſe injunctions to purity of heart reſpecting the individual, are prevented from occaſioning ſuch exceſſes as may injure

* "It is a trite objection," ſays the preſent Lord Biſhop of Landaff, in his valuable preface to his collection of religious tracts, "and grounded on a miſapprehenſion of the deſign of "chriſtianity, which would repreſent it as an intolerable yoke, "ſo oppoſite to the propenſities, as to be utterly deſtructive "of the felicity of the human mind. It is, in truth, quite the "reverſe; there is not a ſingle precept in the goſpel, without "excepting either that which ordains the forgiveneſs of in-"juries, or that which commands every one *to poſſeſs his veſſel* "*in ſanctification and honour*, which is not calculated to "promote our happineſs. Chriſtianity regulates, but does "not extinguiſh our affections; and in the due regulation of "our affections conſiſts our happineſs as reaſonable beings." His Lordſhip's addreſs upon confirmation to young people, ſhall now receive my grateful acknowledgments, and claims the thanks of every other chriſtian parent; it is adapted to do the utmoſt good. As are likewiſe Dr. Prieſtley's ſections (in his treatiſe upon education), reſpecting the neceſſity of an early religious education, and a modeſt purity of manners in youth.

ſociety,

ſociety, for he has equally enjoined men to be humble and charitable.*

What it is to ſee God, *we* cannot know, but *he* ſurely did who came from the boſom of his heavenly Father to teach us that *the pure in heart ſhall ſee God*; and could not reaſon at all conceive the nature of this reward, it would readily conjecture it to be a very great one, not only on account of the excellent virtue to which it is promiſed, but of the tranſcendently excellent and godlike perſon who has declared it. And ſurely ſince it has been thus declared, we cannot but awfully infer, that he who is not *pure in heart ſhall* not *ſee God.*

* "In general," as the pious and admirable Biſhop Taylor juſtly obſerves (ſays a living Prelate, of whom poſterity will not ſpeak in inferior terms), "his piety," *i. e.* the piety of our bleſſed Lord, "was without affrightment of precedent, or "prodigious inſtances of actions greater than the imitation of "men.—The inſtances of it were actions of a very holy, but "of an ordinary life; and we may obſerve this difference in "the ſtory of Jeſus from eccleſiaſtical writings of certain "beatified perſons, whoſe life is told rather to amaze us, "and to create ſcruples, than to lead us in the evenneſs and "ſecurity of a holy conſcience."

Biſhop Newcome's obſervations on our Lord's conduct, p. 326.

It matters not that this ſurrounding world and its hoſt of temptations ſwell our hearts high againſt whatever is *called God*, for we know, and in our ſerious moments are alarmingly conſcious that the world, with all its pomps of pride and vanities of pleaſure, is ruſhing forwards into the ocean of annihilation. We contemplate with awe the rapidity of this ſwollen river; and anticipate in gloomy forebodings the advancing moment when the viſionary ſcene ſhall ſhut upon us. If the things terreſtrial graſp our hearts, and grow, as it were, into them, ſtill we foreſee the approach of death, and tremble, foreſeeing in death an inſtantaneous and the utmoſt diſunion between them and us. Could the whole material univerſe, all its coſtly furniture, and all its variety of living creatures preſent themſelves to our apprehenſion, the gorgeous ſpectacle would be conſidered by our *reaſon* but as a pageant of the ſlighteſt texture, being what it is, and ſo continuing by the divine favour. *To-day* we are alive, our minds poſſeſſed by old prejudices and partialities, with ideas of the things terreſtrial which ſurround us, and with paſſions excited by this or that

deteſted

deteſted or beloved fellow creature; *to-morrow* it may be we are dead, and become reſpecting theſe things as if we had never been, and we have no more an intereſt in any thing under *this* ſun. God *is*, and *comparatively* ſpeaking, there *is* nothing elſe. In this reſpect, not only every thing under the ſun is vain, but the ſun himſelf, and all the hoſt of ſuns, moons, and planets which illuminate the material univerſe; for in this ſenſe, all *creation itſelf* is vain. Imagination and words are wanting to ſhew *our* weakneſs, and the *divine* ſtrength. We cannot adequately conceive, and much leſs expreſs, our dependance upon *God:* but when his own word aſſures us that He *is love*, that He is not only the moſt perfect object of the moſt perfect love, but love itſelf—our conceptions of the Deity, of his wiſdom and power, of his goodneſs and glory are ſuch, that we cannot but feel the utmoſt deſire to *ſee God*. Nature itſelf cries out from within us, and with all its force, I would ſee my *Creator* if I could, for in him *I live, move, and have my being*; I would behold, and participate, as much as poſſible, of his goodneſs and felicity; being *weak*, I would become

ſtrengthened

ſtrengthened by the utmoſt union with *Omnipotence*; being *ignorant*, I would ſit *a docile diſciple* at the feet of *Omniſcience*; being *ſinful*, I would be *purified* by the communion of perfect *holineſs*; and being a *periſhable creature*, I would derive all the energies of *life* from the approving ſmile of *Life itſelf*, of the *Creator*; and being a child of *ſorrow*, I would *commune with my God, and be at peace.*

But this additional power, wiſdom, and holineſs, with life and happineſs, are in effect promiſed by the Son of God, on practicable conditions reſpecting ourſelves, when he ſays, *bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.* What matters then the weakneſs, the mutability, the precariouſneſs of all creatures? they are as nothing of evil, if God is *all in all* to us. For being *pure in heart* we ſhall be made ſtrong, and happy for all eternity by the *ſight of God*, who is adorably gracious in the means which he has appointed for this glorious end. I ſpeak not of his ineſtimable love in the redemption of mankind by Jeſus Chriſt, but of the conduct which he claims of us as the *co-operating* means of our ſalvation: a conduct otherwiſe deſirable, were there no reward

ward annexed to it in a future ſtate. However, it is true, that the utmoſt degree of happineſs, the great and conſummate ſalvation is implied in *the ſight of God*. This is that viſion, or peculiar preſence of Deity, the proſpect of which has ſupported the ſaint through his relentleſs labours, and the martyr againſt the fear of an afflictive and fatal perſecution. Let the *believing* mind but glance a moment upon it, and it muſt *own* at leaſt, and if it duly *conſiders* it, it will then *feel*, with a victorious joy, that he who has the hopes to ſee *God* is perfectly independent of *man*.

As our advancement in the knowledge of the divine *works* increaſes in our conception the evidence of the divine *word*, ſo it enlarges alſo our view of the motives which excite obedience to it. That creatures muſt ſtill be finite, however glorified, and enlarging in glory throughout a bleſſed eternity, is a truth unqueſtionable. If then the *infinite* God can never be *perfectly* comprehended by a *finite* being, let us however be contented with the hope of ſeeing him more and more throughout eternity, advancing in happineſs as we advance

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in this knowledge. And now let us glance a thought upon what he *has* created, and what he *may*. It is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that being *pure in heart* here, we may hereafter become the ſpectators of *both*. For inſtance, we are preſent with a hoſt of angels, and God is to act; he ſpeaks, and it is made—ſome glorious world—we behold it. Imagination ſhrinks beneath the conception, and a few plain words are enow upon the ſubject. It is a nobler, and ſurely a juſter theology (for *we* cannot think too highly of *God*), to ſuppoſe man the loweſt of intelligent beings and free-agents: we cannot conceive any lower, or an intermediate being of this deſcription between man and the brute beaſt which advances the neareſt to intelligence. But ſhall we ſuppoſe that the habitations ſo numerous, ſo innumerable, adapted to the higher orders of being, are not ſuperior in excellency to this earth? Yet this might have been a *continuing* paradiſe to us, a palace of delights, had we not degraded the image of the King of Kings in which we were made. Think then of God ſeen hereafter more and more in his glorious works, and we

ſhall

ſhall be animated to unlock the golden gates of ſuch an eternity, by being *pure in heart* for the particle of time allotted us in this ſtate of trial. Delightful is the ſenſe of progreſs in any laudable purſuit or ſcience; and one can conceive that an individual would require ages to improve what is improvable, and to know what is to be known on this earth. We may conjecture, from the ſatisfaction which we take in the ſociety of our wiſer and worthier fellow creatures, what ſuperior pleaſures of the ſame kind are in reſerve for us hereafter: and without carrying our imagination beyond the atmoſphere, and the creatures of this earth, we can conceive a new birth of what *we* ſhould readily call *heavenly* joys, if all men were become righteous, delivered from ſin, diſeaſe and pain, and every form of want and ſorrow; were alſo glorified with new bodies of a beauty and ſtrength as yet unſeen; were endowed with all the means of the moſt rapid movement, and with ſenſes duly ſharpened to wait upon a mind then enabled to move in all directions with a ſuperior grace and energy than have yet appeared among the

ſons

ſons of men.* We can eaſily imagine ſuch a ſcene of virtue and endowments; at leaſt we can ſo far imagine it, with its conſequent joys, as to judge it a reward worthy the auguſt intervention of the *redeeming* Jeſus, and on the part of man, a counterbalance to the utmoſt temporal evils.

What think ye then of man ſtill more endowed, ſtill more glorified, for it is not your reaſon, nor what is of more authority, the word of God itſelf, that will juſtify you in ſetting any bounds, conſiſtent with the divine holineſs, to the *beneficence* of him who

* Or can now be imagined by us, were we (as the Grecian artiſt *compoſed* his Venus) to cull the crowning features of mind from the moſt famous individuals, and fancy them aſſembled in one; for inſtance, the Baconian comprehenſion, the acumen of Ariſtotle, the invention of Homer, the memory of Themiſtocles, the imagination of Shakeſpeare, the loftineſs of Milton, the ſerene fancy and tender ſpirit of Fenelon, the equally benign temper, and exquiſite fancy, with ſuperior vivacity, in Taylor, the Newtonian power and patience of ratiocination, finiſhed with all the flaming charity of St. Paul; yet ſuch a combination of excellency in *one* individual, would probably be as inferior to *every* man in his glorified ſtate, as the moſt ordinary mind on earth would be to the above imagined individual. *O præclarum diem, cum ad illud animorum concilium, cœtumque proficiſcemur et cum ex hac turbâ, et colluvione diſcedemus!*

called

called you out of nothing into the proſpects and hopes of his beatifying love; what think ye then of man, of thyſelf (for this will come home nigher to thee) thus ſtill more accompliſhed, and ſtill more at perfect liberty to take thy way over *all* the works of God, and to aſſociate with the Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the hierarchies of heaven diſperſed in their ſeveral heavenly palaces, or paradiſes, or planets, or whatever the *wanting* language of earth may call them, diſperſed throughout the *whole* univerſe? But whatever joys may be *rationally* ſuggeſted by theſe views, we may advance our hopes ſtill farther (praiſed be God, *bleſſed* for evermore, as for evermore *bleſſing*), ſtill, I ſay, *ſtill farther*—for though God can never be ſeen in his *infinitude* of glory by a *finite* creature, yet he has not ſo ſcantily ſet the limits of our thoughts, that we may not conceive him revealing himſelf ſo *directly* to his creatures, that the very conception of the conſequent happineſs muſt now animate us with the utmoſt deſire, and arm us with the utmoſt reſolution to become *pure in heart*, and qualified to *ſee God*, and therein accompliſh the great and glorious end, for which in the

the beginning he ſaid, *let* US *make man in our image, after our likeneſs.* And when in the beginning he thus ſpoke to the Redeemer and the Sanctifier; and foreſeeing every thing, ſaw the ſtain that was to be brought upon this bright image of himſelf, he ſaw at the ſame time how his grace would anon *redeem* and *ſanctify* it into its original *purity*, and then enable it finally to *ſee* its Maker, and for ever and ever.

Diſtracted views, duplicity of conduct, and the nobler parts of our nature enſlaved to the baſer, are circumſtances pernicious to man, and in the higheſt degree diſhonourable: ſuch are the concluſions of mere *reaſon*. Therefore a man (would he do juſtice to himſelf as a rational creature) would be ſimple, ſincere, and ſuperior to the blind impulſes of imagination and paſſion: he would not at once attempt to ſerve two maſters, but be uniform and conſiſtent, and approve himſelf rational in deſign and conduct, with a view to the proper happineſs and diſtinguiſhing dignity of man. He would eſpecially keep his heart pure, and clear of all foul adherences, and matters foreign to its perfection, and would

eſpecially

eſpecially guard himſelf againſt thoſe unquiet paſſions, or ſenſual appetites, which are apt to gain imperceptibly upon him, and eſtabliſh an uncontrollable dominion. He would be pure in principle and heart, and labour till both are in accord, and in the ſame laudable direction. In ſhort, he would make this purity ſo much his habit, ſo much, as it were, *himſelf*, that occurring temptations would fall off from him, and clear away from him, as the human breath from the moſt poliſhed mirror. This, in truth, is the liberty of the ſons of God; this the preeminent form of human dignity; this the *trampling of Satan under our feet*, by the reſtoration of the divine image in man. Yet if man, however thus at length *encircled* by virtue, ſhould wander inadvertently, as it were, from this holy ground, he will inſtantly warm into holy reſentment againſt himſelf, haſten into reſtorative penitence, double his heed, his *fear and trembling*, and *watch* more, watch and pray, and continue diſſatisfied till his holy efforts ſucceed. Such muſt be his diſſatisfaction, and ſuch its conſequence, if he is bleſſed with the lights, the laws, the motives, and the faith of a chriſtian: theſe lights will

illumine him in all the *methods* of righteouſneſs; he will be admoniſhed by the moſt *wiſe* as well as *divine* teacher, to reſiſt the beginnings of evil, and not to encourage ſin by vicious thoughts or words; he will nurture purity of heart by purity of manners, preſerve it by this modeſt ſhade from the inflammatory warmth of a luxurious age, and avoid an evil ſociety and converſation as he would the gates of hell; he will not preſume too much upon his own ſtrength, nor lead himſelf into temptation, but cultivate a holy prudence, and thereby neither deſert God or his own godlike nature; he will be nobly ambitious to render his heart, by repleniſhing it with angelic virtue, a fit temple for the Holy Spirit, nor will then be diſpoſed or dare to deny God before men. He has in the mean time qualified his own conſcience to be that tribunal which makes him independent of human ſcorn and perſecution. Its ſecret acquittals continually open the outſkirts of heaven to his view, whither he turns himſelf from the ignorance and unkindneſs, the injuſtice, ingratitude, and cruelty of men, and finds that peace which the world cannot give or take away. Even here, in

ſome

ſome degree, he *ſees God*; and thus, even here, begins to gather a few ſheaves of his heavenly harveſt. For if his holy efforts ſo far ſucceed, that he is as pure as he can be, being ſtill but man, he rejoiceth to know that his imperfect purity, *his mite*, his *cup of cold water*, his all which he has, is an offering made acceptable (by his penitence and the blood of his Redeemer) to the King of Kings. Therefore, as the true chriſtian, he is preſerved from ſpiritual pride and deſpair; he becomes humbly amiable and cheerful; he *rejoiceth in the Lord* his Creator, his Preſerver, his Redeemer, and his Sanctifier; and he rejoiceth *always*; for being pure in heart, he doth not only *hope*, but is *confident* that he is within the divine bleſſing, and hath the power to continue ſo till he ſhall triumph over the grave, and ariſe to *ſee God*, and to rejoice in that only preſence, whoſe glorious radiance is a warmth that preſerves life for ever, and a brightneſs that ſheds conſummate felicity upon the partakers of it; as, I pray God, ye may all experience when the ſorrows of Time, and Time himſelf ſhall be no more.

SERMON VIII.

MATTHEW v. 8.

Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.

AS ſurely then as God ruleth in the kingdoms of this paſſing earth, as ſurely as he ſhall reign the Lord of all things when this earth has paſſed away, and as ſurely as we know, each of us, that our ſeveral lives are not certainly *ours* for the next moment, we muſt be ſtupified by carnal habits to an abject degree, were our hearts not deeply intereſted when we are told by him who beſt knew what it was to ſee God, that we muſt be pure in heart in order to obtain the ſight of God.

It

It is nothing to the purpoſe that we cannot, being what we are, fully comprehend the perfection of being, and the ſum of felicity ſuggeſted by theſe ſacred expreſſions: if there is more in them than *meets the ear*, if they include an object which ſurpaſſes the graſp of our underſtanding, yet let us but extend the eyes of our common reaſon as attentively as we are able, and we ſhall diſcern, though at a diſtance, the fair boundaries of the promiſed land, diſcern, at leaſt, the ſkirts of the glorious heritage which awaits the pure in heart.

Such then is the ſtrength which human weakneſs derives from the divine goodneſs, and ſuch the proſpect preſented by piety to the pure in heart.

Now were it poſſible ſeriouſly to believe that a God did not exiſt—were it true that he did not—what were then, I pray you, the ſituation of man? what his ſtrength when there was no divine providence to regulate thoſe mightier movements of earth, ocean, and air, againſt which all human art and force, man's utmoſt accumulation of reſiſtance, were impotence itſelf. And what ſhall we ſay of the weakneſs of man oppoſed to man?

of the weakneſs of an individual man to reſiſt his own humours and paſſions, when he hath neither the fear or the grace of God to check their diſorderly courſe, and is without any reſpects to a future period of rewards and puniſhments? Nay, let man, now in theſe days of ſcience and divine light, of improved ſociety and civilization, look into himſelf, and abroad upon his neighbour, and he muſt own, when he candidly conſiders the perils of human life, that God is all in all to man, as his hope and ſtrength; and his heart conſulted or not conſulted, will occaſionally call out to him with an impulſe beyond the power of human language to expreſs, that if it has not the favour of God, communes not with God, entitles not itſelf to divine adoption, and hopes not ultimately, in the language of holy writ, to ſee God, it can never be in perfect peace; for it is in a ſtate of continual vanity, which it continually deſpiſes, and of a conſtant peril from innumerable quarters, which it continually dreads.

And now change the ſcene, view man in the contrary ſtate, view him riſing on the wings of virtue and faith, into an aſſertion of that

that dignity of which he was made capable, and for which he was deſigned when made in the image of God. Let the winds roar and madden, and toſs the waves of the ocean ever ſo tempeſtuouſly; let the rains and the floods deſcend, and pour impetuouſly upon the earth, till they cover the everlaſting hills; let the earth itſelf tremble from its very centre, and be ſhaken aſunder, or rage within all its fiery caverns, burſt forth at length, and furiouſly diſcharge the deſolating fires over nations; let the darts of peſtilence fill the whole aerial atmoſphere; let the tyrannous tyrannize, and the murderous murder; and the ſting of ſin be active every where, and in every direction, and with all its venom to torture virtue—yet all the while the good man being ſincere, pure in heart,* and devoted to God, defies every conceivable power but that of God; and Omnipotence his bulwark, is only not omnipotent himſelf. All forms of evil (God being his friend) are but different modes of trial to burn away his droſs and purify his gold, in

* *Integer vitæ, ſceleriſq. purus.*

which (through his love of God) he not only acquieſces patiently, but rejoices triumphantly.*

He who is rich in all the habits, and principles, and hopes of virtue, he who is thus armed, and can ſay, God is my friend, is arrived at that ſtate of mind, of dignity, of victory, of *triumph*, that he cannot conjecture the ſituation, can ſcarcely imagine the moment when his good will not over-balance his evil on this ſide the grave. He ſhall *hereafter ſee God*.—Can any thing more be ſaid in favour of virtue and religion?

Here then, being pure in heart, and in no mean ſenſe, we ſee God, cheered all the while with the hopes of ſeeing him hereafter in a more glorious manner, when the viſion of God ſhall produce *fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for evermore*.

For again I muſt remind you, that there is a certain unity of deſign which conſtitutes every laudable work, and every reſpectable character and conduct. To perſevere in well

* *Si fractus illabatur orbis,*
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

doing

doing is eſſential to a *noble* mind, and that only is a *happy* one whoſe movements are direct, ſimple, and undiſtracted: thus all the human powers are concentred into one point, and all poſſible advancement is made in the beſt courſe. *Be ye pure in heart*, is an advice ſubſtantially the moſt excellent, as it is moral doctrine, and moſt wiſe, as it reſpects the elementary principle of all active virtue. Be ye then pure in heart, and ye ſhall ſee God in conſequence of the good habits and actions that will take place between the principle and the cloſing reward. For believe the holy apoſtle John, that every man *that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as God is pure*. Conſider this doctrine, the model of conduct propoſed in it, and what infer ye reſpecting yourſelves? Avail yourſelves of your experience, ſurvey the preſent times, eſpecially inſpect your own hearts, and determine what is the uſual aim in life, and the rule by which it is governed, and whether it is of the nature, the character, and the grandeur of that which is recommended in theſe words, be ye pure in heart (*i. e.* as far as man can be), even as God is pure. Yet

can man look into your heart as God continually does, can he inflict evil on you with the power of God, or be the ſource of ſuch good to you, as may flow from the very centre of conſummate wiſdom, and felicity, benevolence, and power? Suppoſe that all men imitated the imitable qualities of Deity, his holineſs, benevolence, purity, and juſtice, and conceive, if ye can, that the world would wear the ſame aſpect which it now does. But would it impair its appearance by this change of conduct? It is true that the brow of man would no more be inveſted with the blood-ſtained laurels of ambitious and cruel pride, that his palaces would no more be decorated with the trophies of ſelfiſh policy, or the ſeductive luxuries of effeminate vice; but would the intellect then want its moſt noble exerciſes, or the heart its moſt perfect enjoyments? Would the body itſelf loſe any thing of its bloom, or grace, or ſtrength? What, are *all* the innocent embelliſhments and improvements of this life diſcovered, are the charms of human converſe advanced to their *laſt* perfection, and are all the walks of laudable ſcience become as the trodden high-

way?

way? Will holy hope, and innocence, and meekneſs, patience, and benevolence, and the ſprightlier courteſies of the heart damp the apprehenſion of genuine beauty, and check the career of generous ſpeculation? Will temperance clog that intellect which *intermeddles with all wiſdom*; will it render the eye that meaſures, dizzy; the ear that liſtens, dull; and the head that calculates, confuſed? Will piety and benevolence prevent the graces, and ſuſpend the powers of the poet and painter? Will all the amiable, and honourable, and magnanimous affections, deaden the eyeſight, diſorder the attitude, and unmellow the voice of the orator? Will integrity render menial labour leſs laborious, and ſervitude leſs faithful? Will the conſtant fear and love of God demoliſh all dignity of mind and manners, relax the energies of the patriotic ſtateſman, bias amiſs the civil magiſtrate, or diminiſh the courage of the *juſt* warrior? No; ye cannot heſitate a moment in determining, that to commune with God, and to be acquainted with him, is to be at peace: or in other words, ye muſt be happy in the proportion that ye are pure in heart,

heart, approach towards God, and ſee, and know him throughout the whole extent of your exiſtence, whether on this ſide of the grave, or beyond it. But think aright, and ye will think the more reverently of God, till ye will naturally proſtrate the whole ſoul before a being of ſuch power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs, till ye come to ſee, to believe, and to feel, that God being your guide, your Creator your friend—ye need not fear what man can do unto you—till ye riſe above earth with the utmoſt ſtrength and dignity of which your noble nature is capable, till ye riſe above the terrors of death and judgment, through the redeeming mercies of God.

Be ye then pure in heart, and ſo entirely devoted to God, as ſimply, ſincerely, and fervently, to make him the one law and model of your conduct.

More and more approach unto Him, and be conſcious of your decreaſing imperfections; haſten towards the favour of Omnipotence, and rejoice in your diminiſhed fears; quicken your imitation of conſummate wiſdom and benevolence, grow and increaſe thereby in the ſtrength and lovelineſs of moral behaviour,

and

and become more uſeful and reſpectable, more dear and amiable to all your fellow creatures in every ſocial duty and relation.

Preſent then your hearts unto the Lord your God; render unto him what ought to be his own; learn from the Son of God the great ſecret of human happineſs; regulate your conduct by the nobleſt model; lift yourſelves above the ſorrows, and all the manifold and peculiar temptations of the times; let not the comforts and pleaſurable conveniences of life (God's gifts) be the means of alienating your hearts from God: mark the rapid growth of impiety, mark the alarming conſequences (as they ariſe) in all orders of men; we, and the nations around us, are ſo enlightened by divine providence, that we may now ſee God and his truth in ſuch a view, as to diſcover that godlineſs is moſt profitable in things temporal as well as eternal, and that the greateſt ſervice which we can now do to our country, to mankind, and to ourſelves, is in labouring with our utmoſt efforts, and according to our ſeveral powers and opportunities, to bring man to the moſt ardent ſenſe of this truth, that the greateſt art of

happineſs

happineſs conſiſteth in religion, and that to be pure in heart is the only ſituation by which man can reſcue himſelf from the miſery of diſtracted views, the bondage of ſin, and the terrors of death and judgment, and find himſelf aſſuredly working his way into new joys, till he ſhall be conducted through time into eternity, and find his purity of heart a ſacrifice ſo well pleaſing to God, as to be rewarded according to the fulleſt ſpirit of theſe words, *bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*

SERMON

SERMON IX.

MATTHEW v. 9.

Bleſſed are the peace-makers, for they ſhall be called the children of God.

THE eſpecial Son of God was himſelf the great peace-maker between God and man; therefore this his bleſſing upon the peace-maker muſt impreſs the chriſtian with the moſt attentive reverence, whilſt *all* men, aware that *where* there has been *ſtrife*, there has been *confuſion and every evil work*, muſt be prejudiced in favour of that religion which is the œconomy and the code of peace, which reports the methods of our ſalvation, and inſtructs us to be merciful after the manner

ner in which we have obtained mercy. It is true, that where no good can come of ſtrife, it has been uſually thought an *honour for a man to ceaſe from it*, becauſe it is then an act of beneficial prudence, and therefore the wiſe man well inſinuates that only *every fool will be meddling*.* And it is now ſeen that prudent men are uſually peaceable enough, except when they fancy that ſome great good may be the reſult of contention; and then, if they are ſelfiſh, they can blow up the fire of ſtrife till it deſolates nations; therefore the divine Maſter would extend the ſpirit of peace beyond the point of ſelfiſhneſs, and elevate prudence into charity, when he pronounces his bleſſing not upon the *peaceable* but *peace-maker*. This ye muſt own is the higheſt degree of the peaceable character, and includes a large meaſure of charity in its compoſition; it is eſſential to honour, and is ſupported by fortitude: let me add too, that the wiſeſt of all teachers could not but be aware that he who has maſtered the higheſt degree of this virtue, muſt in his paſſage towards it, have gathered

* Prov. xx. 3.

up

up into his habits the lower. Charity ſhould be the predominating colour in every chriſtian virtue. Charity is of the moſt active nature. A man, for his own ſake, would not uſeleſsly offend another, and would cultivate a peaceable demeanour for the pleaſure which attends it, nor would *go forth haſtily to ſtrive*, leſt he ſhould *not know what to do in the end thereof when* his *neighbour hath put* him *to ſhame*;* nor can he but have often perceived that *the beginning of ſtrife is, as when one letteth out water*.† He would not therefore ſtir the mound which ſhores up the waters of ſtrife, leaſt the *oozing* drops ſhould anon make way for the *ruſhing* torrent. But I ſay, it is ſeen that a man can go ſo far for his own ſake without a tincture of charity, for a contentious man is hated, and obſtructed in his worldly points; and the man is vulgarly conceived the moſt happy, who accompliſhing his temporal purpoſes is at eaſe in the enjoyment of them, and hath contrived by his preceding addreſs to

* Prov. xxv. 8.

† Prov. xvii. 14.

have as few enemies as poſſible to moleſt him.* But if he proceeds no farther, one may preſume to ſay, that he wants the fortitude of a man, the public ſpirit of a citizen, and the kindneſs of a chriſtian: he is, in truth, mean and ſelfiſh, but the character is a *common* one, and uſually accounted a wiſe one; but it is really indolence, apathy, ſelfiſhneſs, cunning, any thing but wiſdom.

Wiſdom never loſes ſight of duty, is comprehenſive in her views, and great in her aims, *uſing* this world but not *abuſing* it; and though ſhe gradually ſoftens the glaring magnanimity of youth into a milder appearance, ſhe ſtill preſerves it, purges off its allay, increaſes its value, then ſets her ſtamp upon it, and ſecures its acceptable currency. A *wiſe* chriſtian will not only be *peaceable*, but a *peace-maker*, for, excluſively of the accord between true wiſdom and religious obedience, he will ſee that it is very practicable to promote the ſpirit of peace, and that they who avoid the office have uſually too mean

* *Vulgus mortalium beatos judicat, qui rebus ex animi ſententiâ compoſitis, degunt in otio, neque quenquam habent, qui ſibi faceſſat negotium.* Eraſm.

an

an opinion of mankind, and have been betrayed into this ignorance from the ſelfiſh occupation of their thoughts. They are only *wiſe in their generation*; but this is no wiſdom, but folly and madneſs in the extreme. And what tells us ſo? The mortality of man, the ſepulchral memorials of thoſe who once thought themſelves wiſe in their generations, the report only of theſe *vaniſhed* memorials, and the ſhade of oblivion overclouding the remoter ages with the affecting aſſurance that they were once as we are, animated with the ſame pulſe of life, ſhone as brightly upon by the ſame meteors of vain-glory, and harraſſing each other with the ſame tumult of paſſions and clamour of conteſt, which at this inſtant precede *our own correſpondent* lapſe into the univerſal ſilence of the grave, and awful extinction of all terreſtrial concerns. Effeminate indolence, unmanly cowardice, a cold and avaricious, a proud and ambitious heart, uſually ſink the peace-maker into the *ſeemingly* peaceable; but language cannot ſupply terms ſufficiently ſtrong to expreſs the guilt of the man that will not, when duty calls, intermediate to promote peace and thwart the progreſs of injurious behaviour.

When miſeries only not worſe than death happen even unto his *friend*, from this his deſertion of duty, what is ſuch a peaceable man? Is he not one that wounds the heart of his friend by the perfidy of his own *omiſſions*, as much as the others do by their injurious *commiſſions?* What then ſhall we call him? It is no matter to ſearch for his definition in vain in the language of *man*, but it behoves him to conſider whether it will not be found and divulged at the tribunal of *God*.

The laws of our moral conduct, laid down by the divine Maſter of mankind, are all ſo pregnant with matter of reflection, are all of ſo wide an influence on practice, that it behoves the ſucceſſive miniſters of his bleſſed word ſo to circumſcribe their obſervations, and ſo to qualify their inſtructions, that the uſe and neceſſity of the precept may be felt in its fulleſt force in their reſpective generations. Suitably to this conception of my duty, I ſhall not ſo much endeavour to take the fulleſt view of my ſubject, as to ſay that which I humbly conceive may be moſt profitable to us, and this ſhall be ſaid with ſuch continual references to your own experience and obſervation, that

ye

ye may all along give yourſelves more inſtruction than any other man can poſſibly do. We meet not here to give or receive a copious diſplay of erudition, but for a far more ſerious purpoſe.

The fruit of the ſpirit is peace, therefore ye are not yet entire chriſtians if ye want this ſign of your holy profeſſion. For (to argue with the beſt, with apoſtolical arguments) ye are not *chriſtianly* ſpiritual, but are as yet carnal or worldly minded, if as yet there be among you *envyings, and ſtrife, and diviſions*. Are we not then entering upon a ſubject which demands a very ſerious attention? And is human life at length become ſo free from the cares, and ſorrows, and miſeries of diſpute, and ſtrife, and the fierceſt contentions, that we ſhould now languiſh in the farther cultivation of chriſtian virtue; or is the will of God at length ſo done on earth as it is in heaven, that we may now rejoice to behold the univerſal prevalence of an angelic temper and conduct? The beſt anſwer to theſe queſtions, is to beſtow immediately our utmoſt attention upon that chriſtian virtue, whoſe gracious influence is not half enough cultivated and underſtood.

Peace (if ye will carefully conſider it) is in part a temper of mind, and in part an external condition: for be ye ever ſo peaceably diſpoſed, ye cannot be ſaid to poſſeſs peace entirely if other men are at enmity with you. But ye are clearly commanded *if it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, to live peaceably with all men*;* and elſewhere in holy ſcripture, *to follow peace with all men.*† But this divine command in its very terms inſinuates, that it may not be within your power to *live peaceably with all men*. True it is, that the generous and charitably warm addreſs of the pacific conduct, will go a great way towards relaxing in all men the rigour of a contentious mind towards your perſons; and this methinks is encouragement enough not only to juſtify but excite your beſt endeavours in the part of the peace-maker.‡ If ye cannot from the nature of things expect an

* Rom. xii. 8.

† Heb. xii. 14.

‡ But this aſſertion is true only to a certain degree; yet it is ſo far true, that more temporal good, and ſuch as is moſt acceptable to an ingenuous mind, will be derived from the pacific behaviour than from the contrary. When a man reſpectable in parts and ſtation

an entire accompliſhment of your benevolent wiſhes, ſtill however ye are religiouſly bounden to do what ye can. But religion in this reſpect (as in moſt others) is a kind friend even to your temporal happineſs; for in the proceſs of your pacific attempt ye will be bleſſed (excluſively of the divine reward), ye will naturally be bleſſed: for conſider what ye are then doing, and with what a mind. Ye are endeavouring

ſtation comes forwards with all the weight of his ſtation, and all the energy of his character, to mediate between contending parties, it is a chance but that he offends both; and though he may effect enough good to juſtify his exertion and approve its utility, this peace-maker may yet create by the exertion many enemies, turn his popularity in this or that quarter into a general odium, ſuffer much in ſome temporal intereſts from this odium, and yet all the while be a gainer in thoſe articles which are moſt eſſential to his peace; for to ſuch a man the eſtimation of the worthieſt men, and the continuance and increaſe of reſpectable friends, is a greater temporal good than all the wealth or grandeur which the moſt powerful faction can give its tool, or the moſt powerful individual the wretched creature his ſlaviſh dependant, whoſe adulatory and ſelfiſh movements, however they may anſwer his *ſmall* ends, and preſerve him *unharmed* in the conflicts of life, can never procure him any thing like eſteem and honeſt reputation. The latter is not merely an uſeleſs, for he is a pernicious member of ſociety, and though his guilt is not apparent, it is felt here, and will be remembered hereafter. But the pacific man, who

endeavouring to make the brethren in nature (not to ſpeak of their additional union in grace) *live together as brethren in unity*. Think, oh! think what unity is; that it is the ſource of that ſupremeſt pleaſure, wanting which, we are *miſerable* in the proportion that we want it. Unity too may be viewed in another light, as that mode of behaviour and ſentiment, by which the individuals united, are receiving through

dares to hazard his reputation, and all temporal proſperities in the cauſe of duty, looking altogether to the public good, gathers up undeſignedly much perſonal good, and has enrolled himſelf in that liſt of chriſtian worthies, who quelling the ſpirit of antichriſtian controverſy by ſucceſſive efforts, ſhall at length totally ſubdue the fiend, and exhibit this Satan trampled under the feet of the pacific Jeſus.——The *wiſdom* of the peace-maker's conduct upon certain occaſions calls out ſtaring *ignorance* into oppoſition, its *generoſity* provokes the hatred of the *ſelfiſh*, its adventurous *fortitude* the pernicious reſtraints of the *timid*, and its *heroic luſtre* the whole diaboliciſm of irritated *envy*. Be it ſo, yet he is all the while eſteemed by every good man who is *really acquainted* with his character, and is all the while not only *following peace with all men*, but occaſionally hazarding his own peace for the ſake of their's, and is therefore the moſt remote from the tremendous condition of them who do not *follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord*. Who that is acquainted with the hiſtories of controverſy, civil and eccleſiaſtical, in Chriſtendom, would believe that we had been in poſſeſſion of the preceding ſacred and

through an amicable combination, more good than they would have otherwiſe poſſeſſed. Two modes of ſociety ſeem neceſſary to complete the temporal welfare of the human individual; that mode which may be called the national, whence ariſeth the ſecurity of property and life, and the reciprocal advantages of different trades and profeſſions; and that more private band of union whence ariſe the joys of virtuous love, of relationſhips in blood, of friendſhip and good neighbourhood: but the evangelic law which we are

and awful exhortation for above 1700 years? Surely the true believer of the pacific Jeſus, ſhould with *fear and trembling* indeed, ſet his firſt ſtep on the line of controverſy, and be cautious in what *manner* he advances, nor idly think that the moral Jeſus would wiſh his *faith* to be *ſo* defended as ſhall mar his *charity*. And the controvertiſt will do well to examine the motives of his conduct, and to be jealouſly aware that this intellectual movement is very tempting to a ſelfiſh, ambitious, and proud mind; that it is eſpecially adapted to diſplay at once all the treaſures of knowledge, and all the faculties of the underſtanding; it affords a wide field to the adroiteſt exerciſes of the reaſon and the fancy, and however ſometimes it laudably exhibits in a commendable form the heroic champion of truth, it is oftener trampled by the feet of thoſe who enter it for the gratification of a bad temper, and the advancement of a mean intereſt.

contemplating

contemplating (including the preceding charities), looks as wide as the mercies of the Lawgiver, and commands us to *follow peace with all men*, and all nations.

It may be obſerved too, that there ariſeth in our ſouls a manly and ſublime pleaſure, with a delightful conſciouſneſs of a conduct wiſe upon the wideſt ſcale of wiſdom, when following peace with all men, we diſcern, we know, we feel ourſelves in the act of gratifying the nobler part of our nature, the *ſociable* and the *generous*; and that by this effort we are continually wearing down all the mean ſelfiſhneſſes and ſordid movements of mind, are perpetually in act to remove out of ſocial life its worſt deformities, to waſh away the ſpots which mar the feaſt of human converſe, to induce a far more gracious hue and colouring upon the great tablet of human manners, and to diſſipate the little low miſts and earth-born vapours of ſpleen, and envy, and avarice, which preſent men in their worſt lights; and that, in ſhort, we are in the courſe to remove at length thoſe portentous and formidable ſtorms and hurricanes of pride and ambition, which toſs whole nations into confuſion, and

ſhatter

ſhatter to their very centre the ſecurity of the mightieſt empires. Surely then the following portion of the divine ſentence, *bleſſed are the peace-makers*, may be borrowed as a merely *rational* deſcription of their eſtate and condition who *follow peace with all men*.

It is another view of the ſubject when this glorious charge to hope and the pacific virtues is ſounded from the heaven of the heavens by the great Peace-maker himſelf—*bleſſed are the peace-makers, for they ſhall be called the children of God*, of God the great *creator*. And is it a light thing for the creatures to reply, we are not deſirous to be called thy children, O God our creator, unleſs we may ſtill gratify our pride and ill-temper by quarrelling with our fellow creatures, no—we had rather ſhew, *in fact*, that we would be called the children of Pride, Contention, and the *Devil?* God, alas, is not yet ſufficiently glorified by the cultivation of *peace and good-will among men*.

But ſurely in all the family of chriſtian graces, amidſt all the daughters of Charity, none has a diviner form of beauty than Peace, or tends more to diveſt man of his acquired corruptions,

corruptions, and to preſent him anew to the light of truth in that image of God in which he was made, and to exhibit him in the *filial* reſemblance of the one eternal *Father*, in the reſemblance of that benevolent Creator, whoſe wiſdom, and power, and goodneſs, have from the beginning to the preſent period of time been one harmonious diſplay of that order and peace, one ſublime illuſtration, and (as it were) one enforcing comment upon that chriſtian grace which we are now contemplating. Therefore the human peace-maker muſt ſee and feel that his bleſſed endeavours to promote peace have ſomewhat in them of a *godlike* generoſity, and that he is treading, though at an infinite diſtance, in the one courſe of the divine beneficence.

Ye then being peace-makers ſhall be called the children of God; and though reſpecting heaven ye may not fully comprehend the nature of this reward, yet when ye caſt your regard upon earth, and behold the relation between a human father and ſon, the tender claims which a worthy child has upon a wiſe and benignant father, ye will then ſee ſomething, and be then conſcious of ſomething inexpreſſibly

inexpreſſibly inviting and animating in theſe words, *ye ſhall be called the children of God.*

Such ye ſee then is the duty, and ſuch the reward of the peace-makers: as human creatures ye cannot but approve and love the duty, and this merely upon a principle of reaſon. And what ſay ye as chriſtians, have ye any peace to make with God, and would ye bow down the heavens, and debaſe the Son of God into the ſorrows and ſervitude of a *human* condition for your own pacification with the divine Father, and yet at the ſame time would be ſo highly ſelf-exalted as to think yourſelves not only at liberty to ſet at nought the rule of ſuch an example in which ye have the cleareſt concernment, but alſo the very expreſs commands of your almighty Maſter? *O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me: ſhouldeſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?* I thy offended Creator would be at peace with thee, wilt thou not be at peace with thy fellow creature; I thy God would become thy *Father*, and wilt thou not ſay to man, become my *brother*.

And

And now let us review what St. Paul ſaid to the Corinthians. *Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there are among you envyings, and ſtrife, and diviſions; are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* That is, as mere men, as men unrenewed, and unregenerated by the goſpel of Chriſt, in ſhort as men (witneſs their hiſtory) have been in all ages: a circumſtance enough to humiliate us before the wiſdom of the divine word, that only panacea of ill manners, that maſs of truth which has been expoſed for ages in our highways through the mercy of God, and yet ſeems to have been as much out of the reach of diſcovery as if it had been hidden *at the bottom of a well.* We know our rule and its practicability, and ſhould bluſh not to become in very deed the diſciples of the pacific Jeſus, not to permit our gracious Redeemer and only mediator to dictate a duty which no other teacher can by his own conduct ſo attractively recommend, or by his own authority ſo ſacredly enforce, as that only teacher who was both God and man. Let us then at length be taught by God himſelf, and be at length admoniſhed by the follies of men in all ages, and ſurely by the experience of our

own

own times *to follow* (each of us according to our ability) *peace with all men.* Thus ſhall we kindly foſter our immortal ſouls, and train them for a bleſſed eternity, by a cultivation of thoſe charitable habits which are not more the appointed than the natural preparations for heaven.

There is ſomething in peaceable affections ſo congenial to human nature, that we advance into them with a more accelerated pace than (it may be) into any other habits to which we have been ſtrangers. And then how ſoon do we come to wonder that we had been ſo long miſſing our trueſt way of pleaſantneſs, which is no other than the path of peace. And is there ſuch a ſatisfaction in ſtruggling along the road of contention, that we ſhould be deſirous of continuing on it? Grant that it is the moſt obvious to the greateſt and rareſt poſſeſſions on earth—what then, they are too rare to be poſſeſſed by many, and thence it leads to conteſt and diſappointment, *and the ſorrow of the world, which worketh death.* A voice from within us whiſpers, that we are always walking after a vain ſhadow which leads us into death and a fearful judgment to come.

Let

Let us aim at the good things which are in abundance for all, at preſent peace, *and the aſſurance for ever*. But open one page in your book of experience, and aſk yourſelves, whether after a quarrel with a fellow creature, after this ſtorm of contention, ye did not feel a delightful relief in the calm of reconciliation? Review your opinion upon the peace-maker, his appearance, and his eſtimation. Ye are ſurrounded with conteſts and provocations to contend—ye are ſtill peaceable, peace-makers, and compoſed amidſt the hurricanes which bluſter around you; ye are as angels among evil men, and while ye ſhed the tear of pity, ye exult in the conſciouſneſs of the moſt glorious victory. Certain forms of bleſſedneſs, certain features of felicity eminently diſtinguiſh the children of peace: ſuch is the duty, the the lovelineſs, the dignity, and the happineſs of the pacific conduct. I cannot enlarge farther upon theſe points; they are then diſmiſſed, and I now finally come to that which ever ſhould be the firſt point of thoſe who ſtand in this place.

Do ye then love life, a happy life for time and eternity, follow St. Peter's advice, *ſeek peace, and enſue it*.

Love

Love ye your neighbours, would ye live with them, as brethren with brethren in unity, hear what St. James ſaith, *have no bitter envyings, and ſtrife.*—Any thing like envy is bitterneſs itſelf. The ſpite of man (not ſeldom) at the gifts of God, and a diabolical movement to demoliſh their uſe, and intercept their eſtimation.

Men envied for their virtue, are uſually off their guard, are not vain enough to think themſelves the objects of envy; unenvious themſelves, they would not think others envious; the venom has been inſtilled before they are aware of it, and its taint has ſpread too far to admit of a cure. Envy itſelf implies oppoſition; and this odious ſelf-tormentor will not long continue merely a ſentimental oppoſition: *it walketh to and fro upon the earth, ſeeking whom to devour.* If it acts with deſign, if its operation may be called wiſdom, it is not the wiſdom *from above, that is firſt pure, and then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated.* Purity of manners is the foundation of peace, and innocence the ſoil which feeds the beautiful bloſſom of love. Be ye then firſt pure in order to be peaceable; pure

from uncharitable pride and debaſing luxury, from lawleſs ſenſuality and diſhoneſt ſloth. Let Juſtice ſet the barriers, and Charity model the movements of our ſelf-attentions; let even common ſenſe and experience abate our love of this world, by preſenting to our thoughts the precariouſneſs of earthly goods, and the certainty of death; and let Faith finiſh the leſſon, by unfolding the conditions of eternity.

We ſhall then no longer abuſe this world, but uſe it as a ſchool of manners for the pacific ſociety of angels, and good men made perfect in the preſence of God, who himſelf is love, and therefore the fountain of the many graces of which peace is but one. Oh! may we behold it flowing before us in all its riches throughout all eternity!

Follow then, ye ſervants of the great Peace-maker, *follow peace with all men.*

If ye cannot effect it with all men, ye will at leaſt rejoice (ye cannot but rejoice) in the conſciouſneſs of the endeavour; but ye cannot doubt of effecting it with thoſe in whoſe amicable behaviour ye are moſt intereſted, with the members of your own houſehold,

with

with the few in whoſe affections ye have the tendereſt, any material concern.

Honour all men, be quiet, and mind your own buſineſs; the ſand of your time is waſting apace; life is an opportunity upon the wing; ſelf-knowledge is not eaſily attained; and it is an arduous ſtudy for each man to build up his own ſoul with the needful graces for eternity. Be meek, and be well tempered, be courteous, and be cheerful, that is, be truly chriſtian, and there is little danger but that ye will have peace enough for your temporal comfort.

Reſpecting your duties to your country, know that there is not that citizen ſo humble in place and condition, who may not contribute ſomewhat to public peace and union, by expreſſing his hearty good wiſhes towards it, by his fervent prayer to Him who only ruleth in the kingdoms of men, by not preſuming to judge, to talk, and diſpute beyond his meaſure of abilities and information. The well being of a great community depends as much upon the governed as governors: if the former, a ſtrong and numerous body, have not a factious ſpirit, they will ſoon acquire a wiſe one, and this wiſdom will lead them to

every public virtue which their reſpective ſituations admit. Let us then call upon reaſon to aſſiſt charity in diſcovering and preventing the cauſes of diſcord. For this is not ſo much the work of angelic ſagacity, as it is the proper aim of a man, would he wiſh to become an angel in heaven. And thus as individuals and citizens, ye ſee that chriſtian principle is the only foundation of happineſs, and greatneſs, and genuine glory. And ſo it will be found, and ſo it will be UNIVERSALLY acknowledged before the end of time, when the peace-making *children of God* ſhall have introduced UNIVERSAL *peace and good will among men.*

SERMON

SERMON X.

MATTHEW V. 10.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

THE kingdom of heaven is not only promiſed to theſe holy martyrs, but it is afterwards ſaid, that *great* is their reward in the kingdom of heaven:* therefore ſome have concluded, that as theſe have ſtood the utmoſt teſt of virtue, a more excellent character has been found in them, than in ſuch men as were unequal to this ſevere trial. But a certain character is a prerequiſite for certain enjoy-

* Matt. v. 12.

ments, and the ſuperior capacity for the ſuperior reward. Hence a juſt argument is drawn for the cultivation of the utmoſt virtue, but hence alſo an unjuſt inference is not to be drawn that the place in heaven will be proportioned to the *ſucceſs* of the endeavour, for this depends not upon the will only, but alſo upon the talents with which it is enabled, more or leſs, to execute its purpoſe. The will is the ſeat of fidelity; but the actions and habits, which conſtitute the character of a man, are excellent in proportion as the will is gifted with talents to produce and accompliſh them. It is *reaſonable* and *religious* to believe that what is *pitiably* wanting on earth to qualify the integrity of the will for the production of its beſt fruits, ſhall hereafter be ſupplied by God as a preparation for its appointed reward; and this for the ſame reaſon as he ſhall glorify the bodies of the virtuous. An idea worthy to be cheriſhed were it only for its preſent effects on our minds, for it will clear away from them many unpleaſant thoughts, check our readineſs to cenſure and lament what appears ſinful in many men whom a defective

defective intellect, education, and other unpropitious circumſtances prevent *at preſent* from being thoſe excellent perſons which the rectitude of their hearts would render them. Add too, that if we are thus in the cheerful habit of anticipating in thought this divine purification and preparation of the human character for heaven, and thus foreſee this auguſt preference of moral merit in the heart (whatever may be its effects), we ſhall enlarge our candour, charity, and contentment with the preſent ſtate of things; be leſs elated than we are with our wiſdom and other advantages, the gifts of divine providence; ſhall more and more *honour all men*; become merciful, even *as our Father who is in heaven is merciful*; acknowledge the tranſcendent excellency of virtue and holy ſincerity; and be animated to give a good account of our reſpective talents by the religious cultivation of them for our own ſakes, and alſo by the beſt exertion of them, after the example of the divine goodneſs, in the moral improvement of our fellow creatures. Theſe obſervations may not be without their uſe although they are not cloſely

connected with the purpoſed ſubject of our contemplation, which is their virtue who defy perſecution for righteouſneſs' ſake, and their reward, the kingdom of heaven. The ſame reward is aſſigned to the poor in ſpirit; to theſe, in order to exalt the humble in the view of mankind, and to thoſe, becauſe the greateſt degree of virtue is naturally connected with the greateſt reward. But although in the benediction which is before us, the one kingdom of heaven is equally aſſigned to both, yet ſoon afterwards the diſcriminating teacher adds, reſpecting them who are perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake, that *great* is their reward in the kingdom of heaven; for eminently *great* indeed is their fortitude, love, and faith. God is never ſo owned, as when poor, frail, periſhable man gathers up all his holy reſolution, and in the cauſe of God ſets all men and their miſchiefs at defiance, and thus ſprings up, as it were, from earth to heaven, and in ſome ſenſe (with St. Stephen) ſees in the clouds his Saviour and his attendant angels, ready to receive with extended arms their *approved* friend. He has ſtood the laſt

trial

trial of fidelity, and has now cauſe to hear, *well done thou good and faithful ſervant.**

The benediction upon the peace-maker preceding that which now engages our attention, naturally introduced it, and this is cloſely connected with, and much illuſtrated and enforced by, the following animated exhortations. *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the ſalt of the earth; but if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on an hill cannot be hid,*

* Among the faithleſs, faithful only he;
Among innumerable falſe, unmov'd,
Unſhaken, unſeduc'd, unterrify'd
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To ſwerve from truth, or change his conſtant mind
Though ſingle.——

Paradiſe Loſt. Book 5. *line* 897.

Neither

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the houſe. Let your light ſo ſhine before men that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Excluſively of the divine authority which enforces theſe exhortations, they muſt impreſs the intelligent mind with admiration, ſuch is the ſpirit of their addreſs in the ſtatement of the perſecution which is to be undergone, and in the majeſtic manner in which the effect of this preeminent righteouſneſs is deſcribed, whilſt it is brought forwards by arguments of the moſt deciſive energy and clearneſs. One is ſo far perfectly ſatisfied, and convinced, and exhorted, that it is in general the duty of men to defy perſecution for righteouſneſs' ſake, for we ſee that otherwiſe their light cannot ſo ſhine before men, as to preſerve the authority of the divine law over the human heart. And although theſe exhortations are addreſſed principally to the Apoſtles and the Diſciples of Chriſt, now on the eve of a ſevere perſecution, yet the conſolation herein afforded them extends, without doubt, to all men, who on the

ſame

ſame account may hereafter be in the ſame or ſimilar ſituation. Perſecution, however its form may vary, would ſtill (as the divine Maſter could not but foreſee) overcloud the earthly tabernacles of that high order of men, who in all ages are zealous to purſue the moſt heroic courſe of virtue, and are qualified to be the ſuperior benefactors of their reſpective generations.

I purpoſe therefore that the remainder of this diſcourſe ſhall be a paraphraſe of our bleſſed Saviour's addreſs to ſuch as are perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake; and in order to enforce it, and make the more ſerious impreſſion, let us ſuppoſe our Lord himſelf thus unfolding his own doctrine. It is well known that in private he more fully explained to his Diſciples what he had in public addreſſed to the multitude: and I truſt that it will be no violence to decorum to conceive, that upon the ſubject of perſecution for righteouſneſs' ſake, he might have explained himſelf familiarly to his Diſciples to the following purport:

Yes, I tell you again, my faithful ſervants, that ye ſhall merit to be called the ſons of God,

God, if ye ſeek peace with all men, if ye labour (uſing all the methods of a conduct amiable, mild, and generous) to ſpread the ſpirit of peace among all mankind. And yet I muſt alſo tell you, that ſuch, too often, is the temper of men, that this beautiful form of righteouſneſs will but the more expoſe you to their malevolence, and excite them to *conſider* you as enemies to their perſons, merely becauſe your manners are a reproach to their vices. It can ſcarcely be called *conſideration*, but ſuch are the ill conditions of the wicked, that they will *feel* you to be as their enemies, and behave to you according to their habits of vengeance; they will therefore perſecute you on account of that very righteouſneſs which ye would imagine to be the cleareſt and moſt engaging proof of your benevolence towards them; they will deteſt you on account of that very conduct which cannot hurt any one, and is adapted to benefit all. Yet let not this ill return afflict you, this unnatural hatred of lovelineſs itſelf even aſtoniſh you; nor will it, if ye always carry in your minds, how ignorance blinds the underſtanding, how the ill-humours of ſin almoſt draw a madneſs over it,

it, how pride peculiarly renders the heart ungrateful, and how the fierce obſtinacy of vice ſtrikes away the hand which is extended in mercy to heal all its infirmities. Be not, I ſay, caſt down in deſpair, if ye, being friendly to all men, find them all your foes; for to you is promiſed not only the kingdom of heaven, but a reward that is great in heaven.

It is true, my choſen Apoſtles and Diſciples, that for a time it will be difficult to you, being ſo juſt, not to hate the unjuſt; being ſo grateful, not to abhor the ungrateful; and being ſo benevolent, not to be tenderly touched at the cruelty of an unkind fellow creature: but they are properly the objects of your pity, for it is not in you *as men* to judge, ſince it is not in you *as men* to know all the pitiable circumſtances which have inſenſibly drawn other men into evil habits, or the force of their habits in compariſon with the power of reſiſtance. Injuſtice, ingratitude, unkindneſs, are the objects of your utmoſt deteſtation—but ſpare the perſons of men—leave the ſentence which is to be pronounced on them to Him only who made man, knows whereof he

he is made, and every thing appertaining to every man: as for yourſelves, *judge not*.

It is the utmoſt effort of man to bring all his ſentiments and paſſions into perfect accord with the principles which his reaſon, duly exerting itſelf, approves. Therefore would ye turn to the Lord your God, by ſubduing yourſelves into the readieſt obedience to his laws, *conſider*, and I ſay again, *conſider your ways*; retire, as ye have often ſeen me, to think, and to pray, and occaſionally withdraw from the world, in order to acquire the principles and tempers, which only can create your ſuperiority to its temptations and ſorrows.

I propoſe a great work to you, ſuch a meaſure of righteouſneſs as will expoſe you to perſecution; but difficult as ye will find the exertion, it is an exertion ſo godlike, that the reward in your view ſhould animate you to undertake it: beſides the greater your virtue, the greater its immediate ſatisfaction. Ye have therefore the utmoſt reaſon to prepare, and arm yourſelves cheerfully for the ſevere warfare which is before you—for verily I tell you (I who know your prize) that your reward will

will be more than proportioned to your deſert, according rather with the benevolence of my heavenly Father, than with your merits. Fear not then any form of human cruelty, aſſured that the perſecution of the wicked cannot wound your innocence, and muſt upon the whole increaſe your felicity. Amidſt all the ſtorms of human malice, rays of comfort will dart themſelves into your hearts. If the ſtrokes of adverſity, though quick in ſucceſſion, ſhould be ſo ſevere that ye cannot but number them, number them every one, but remember that they are the chaſtiſements of a loving Father; and by being well ſuſtained, become in you the ſeveral exertions of a champion, for each of which he ſhall receive a ſeveral crown. Pour the arrows ever ſo thick upon you, your periſhable *body* intercepts them all—they cannot kill your *ſoul*. If your wretched aſſailants revile you, accuſe you, charge you with every crime, curſe you, and torture you with all their inſtruments of torture, theſe are but ſo many hints and admonitions of your approaching glory. Still being meek, compaſſionate, and benevolent, ye contemplate the virtue which is out of

their

their reach, ye behold it, and triumph in holy hope, ye lean upon the power, and the promiſe, and the goodneſs of God, and returning good for evil, effectually convert the evil intended you into your beſt good.

Such is my law, that its beauty of holineſs is odious to them who are deformed, and ſuſpect themſelves to be deformed, by vice; their deeds are evil, and they cannot bear the light of my law: therefore when your ſuperior benevolence and ſenſe of duty would hold it to their view, they will ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake. It is I your beloved maſter that offends them, and therefore ye my Diſciples become the objects of their vengeance. This I know, this I ſhall behold, and this I will remember when ye ſhall appear at my judgment ſeat. Have ye not then cauſe to rejoice and be exceeding glad, when ye ſhall be perſecuted for the ſake of righteouſneſs and of me?

And now remember that it was ſo men perſecuted the Prophets which were before you. Come a few years, and ye with them, and with their and your perſecutors, ſhall be gathered to the fathers who are aſleep. And

what

what ſay ye now, my beloved, of the Prophets and the Martyrs of old time? That God hath converted their evil into good, the revilings and the falſe accuſations which once aſſailed them, into titles of praiſe, eulogies of renown, the pureſt fame on earth, and glory in heaven—where *glory endureth for ever*.

And what is now become of their once-afflictive tortures? They are vaniſhed with the ſpeed of the arrow which divideth the air, and leaveth no trace behind it. But the ſtory of their high achievements paſſeth not away as a tale of ſome *trivial* event once told, and then for ever forgotten; it ſtill lives in the memory, and revives in the converſation of the wiſe and the worthy, and hymns and ſacred anthems ſtill celebrate *the holy company of the Martyrs*. But *on earth* they received the condemnation of the wicked as the praiſe of their righteouſneſs, and accounted the perſecution of the ſinner as a crown of glory placed upon their heads by the King of Glory himſelf.

Such therefore being the *Prophet's reward*, have ye not cauſe to cultivate *a Prophet's righteouſneſs?*

Still, I ſay, that it is the greateſt effort of man, the utmoſt ſtretch of human magnanimity, ſpreading far beyond the extent of ordinary attainment, and riſing high above the common opinions and affections. For how few are they who do not ſhudder at bodily pain, at the menace, at the approach of an ignominious and torturing death? how few who aſperſed with unjuſt accuſations, and aſſaulted by rude manners and inhuman actions, do not kindle into the flame of revenge—yet from you, my faithful ſervants, and ſuch as ye are, I demand no leſs a virtue than what diſtinguiſhed the Martyrs and Prophets in the paſt ages.

To ſuch therefore in all ages, I for ever addreſs myſelf in the following manners *directly* to you, and through you to them. Alas! the neceſſity of my admonition will laſt for many generations to come.

The earth is full of wickedneſs; the moral world is corrupt, diſordered, and diſſolving in ſin; but yours is the appointed force of mind, of manners, and of heart to reſtore the healthy energy of virtue.

Ye are the ſalt of the earth.

Therefore being ſuch, deſert not yourſelves, impair not your own ſtrength and purity, do not diſqualify yourſelves for doing that good which ye only can do; abuſe not the talents intruſted to you by my Father for his deareſt purpoſes, for the very ſame purpoſes for which he ſent me into the world; defraud not man of the ſervice which ye are bounden to do unto him by the very ability to do it; for if thus eminently arrayed with fit faculties, and thus *divinely* appointed for the firſt courſe of human activity, ye deſert your duty on account of a few fleeting evils (ſince the utmoſt perſecutions of the righteous in this life amount to no more), and through fear (which in ſuch as you is the baſeſt form of fear) can melt yourſelves into the common maſs of men, ye ſurely merit an uncommon contempt, a puniſhment adequate to the reward which ye *might* have earned, an ignominy, a deteſtation proportioned to that glorious eſteem of God and man which ye were qualified to obtain; verily ye merit now to *be trodden under foot of man*, and hereafter to undergo a penal humi-

liation proportioned to that *great* reward and ſtation in heaven, which might have otherwiſe been your portion.

Ye are the light of the world.

Therefore my Diſciples, and my Diſciples alone, give your hearts unto my law, for it is alſo the law of the Lord your God; therefore mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt it; ſee it containing the light of life, and the way of ſalvation, the only way of perfect *pleaſure*, and the only path of everlaſting *peace*; ſee it bringing into light everlaſting life, unfolding the promiſe of divine grace, cheering penitence into reformation, driving away the demons of guilt and deſpair, re-edifying the ſoul half ruined by ſin, and opening to the purified eye the approaching glories of heaven.

Be it yours, my beſt-beloved, to diſtribute this healing medicine over the *ſickening* earth, and to unite with your gracious Redeemer in his friendly regards to you and all men; become my fellow-labourers in the beſt work of love, and *buſy* with me only *in doing good* to others, take little account of the pleaſures and glories of the time preſent, and ye will then readily do the good to others which ye

expect

expect not of them; and will come at length, through the power of habit, to account it *your meat and drink to do my will.*

Ye are a light upon an eminence, therefore do not hide your light with encircling walls, but ſhine abroad, that ye may be ſeen ſhining far and wide, ſo that they who are loſt in the wilds and on the ſeas of life, may behold your luſtre, and recover their way.

Ye are a city that is ſet on a hill.

Become ye therefore as a city of joy and refuge, eſtabliſhed with perfect order, and reſplendent with conſummate glory. Yea, let my faithful ſervant (as the Prophet ſaith) *lay* his *ſtones with fair colours, and* his *foundations with ſapphires, make* his *windows of agate, and all* his *borders of pleaſant ſtones.**

For ye ſhould peculiarly adorn the doctrine of God in all things, attemper the innocence of the dove with the wiſdom of the ſerpent, and the tenderneſs of an ever-flowing benevolence with a fortitude beyond the force of that human heroiſm which has not been formed in my ſchool.

* Iſaiah liv. 11. 12.

Therefore build your righteouſneſs upon my foundations, and advance the fabric by the degrees which I have taught you. Reject all human ambition by *my poverty of ſpirit*, all the voluptuous blandiſhments of life by my *holy ſeriouſneſs*, and every revengeful emotion by *my my meekneſs*. Then, but not till then, ye will have placed ſuch a gulph between this world and your inclinations, that ye will be at liberty, and will be excited *to hunger and thirſt after all righteouſneſs*, after the ever-needed exertions of a *compaſſionate heart* for the ſake of others, all the forms of *purity* for your own dignity and gratification, and the ſweet and conciliatory practice of the affectionate *peace-maker*. Ye will then appear in all the luſtre of *righteouſneſs*, and be ſo deeply rooted in truth and juſtice, that their precious and *rare* virtue will glow in every vein, and bear fruit on every branch. And now is the time when the invidious ſhall moſt envy you; and Sin and Satan, dreading the Champion of Righteouſneſs, ſtand foremoſt to oppoſe your victorious advancement.

Ye are the ſalt of the earth, ye are the light of the world, and the city that is ſet on a hill—

a hill—therefore ye will be found an application too ſevere to ſome degrees of diſeaſe, a light too oppreſſive to the weakeſt eyes, and a ſpectacle too beautiful to thoſe imaginations which are impaired and diſordered by ſin.

If then Wickedneſs ſhould endeavour to trample you beneath its feet, to extinguiſh you, and to ſhatter your foundations to the ground, remember that ye are ſuffering for the ſake of righteouſneſs and of me: think then, O ye ingenuous minds, what righteouſneſs is, and ſtill think, O my beloved Diſciples, who I am, and what I ſhall be to all men, when I ſhall come in the glory of my Father to judge the quick and the dead, and *ye will rejoice and be exceeding glad*, however ye may ſuffer perſecution for righteouſneſs' ſake, inaſmuch as I ſhall then aſſign you the reward which is *great* in the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON XI.

LAMENTATIONS iii. 27.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth——

IT is ſo in many reſpects. It is ſo reſpecting the preſent life, which itſelf would become a very burthenſome yoke, if we ſhould not be inured to ſome evil in the outſet: but it is ſtill more ſo reſpecting the future period of our exiſtence, which, by the divine appointment, is a condition of miſery or happineſs, accordingly as we demean ourſelves in the preſent ſtate. An early religious education, recommended in the words of my text, is needful as preparatory to that right conduct in life, for the fruits of which we can only account

account life itſelf a deſirable bleſſing. This right conduct is, in other words, that wiſdom whoſe *ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all* whoſe *paths are peace*. Pleaſantneſs and peace are aſſuredly the beſt fruits of human conduct; and a man muſt be very unſeen in human life and human nature, not to have diſcovered that a good conſcience is the beſt ground of peace, and that on this ground thoſe bleſſings are apteſt to bloom which conſtitute pleaſantneſs itſelf, all the genuine gaiety of innocence, all the ſuperior joys of benevolent affection, and all the inſpiriting conſciouſneſs of that dignity which reſults from a life of integrity and manly fortitude, from the holy converſe with God, and the proſpect of his everlaſting rewards. Theſe being in view, however diſtant, a luſtre of holy pleaſantneſs is derived from them upon the ſoul, which it reflects upon all the objects that at preſent ſurround it, and the brightneſs of the celeſtial manſions is in part transferred to our terreſtrial habitation; ſuch is the beatifying efficacy of faith, ſuch is the contentment, the peace, the pleaſantneſs even in this life, which diſtinguiſh a rational, a wiſe, a religious conduct. It is

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in charitable accommodation to ordinary apprehenſion and vulgar prejudice, when our bleſſed Saviour pronounces the wicked *wiſe in their generation*. Such as *have ears to hear him* clearly underſtand his meaning, and acknowledge with Solomon (who knew little of a future ſtate), that the *ways* of religion are eminently *the ways of pleaſantneſs, and* that ALL *her paths are peace*. Therefore it behoves us indeed to inquire whether men can obtain this happineſs if they are not *early* trained into thoſe habits which produce it, if they *bear* not this *yoke* of preparatory diſcipline in their *youth*.

We cannot obtain a maſtery in the ſeveral callings and profeſſions which ſerve our temporal intereſts, without ſome previous training, ſome preparatory diſcipline. But is no training, no preparatory diſcipline previouſly neceſſary as the means of our eternal happineſs? If we cannot otherwiſe become habitually virtuous, they ſurely are the means. Is then the moral and religious character all at once obtained, as ſoon as our underſtanding can perceive the foundations, the evidences, and the nature of moral and religious truth?

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This is a queſtion of the very firſt importance. The ſubject which it involves peculiarly merits a diſcuſſion in theſe times; and among many other reaſons, more eſpecially for this—that plauſible ingenuity, with too general an acceptance among the reading (I do not ſay the thinking) part of mankind has publicly aſſerted, that ye ſhould not principle a child in the doctrines of any particular religion, leaſt ye ſhould ſeduce him into a wrong one, and force the pliant twig into an artificial deformity. A plauſible argument, and too captivating to thoſe in whoſe eyes the world appears with its moſt ſeductive forms. It was the conceit of an honeſt enthuſiaſt, who ſaw ſome things well, and could expreſs his thoughts with an ingenuous eloquence—it is therefore adapted in *its matter* to pleaſe thoſe who can only reaſon, but *that* narrowly, and in *its manner* thoſe who chiefly feel, and can ſcarce reaſon at all. Ye will probably think with me, that theſe include ſo great a part of mankind, that we cannot too ſeriouſly diſcuſs an opinion which is continually gaining ground upon us, and which ought to be repelled by the utmoſt efforts of thoſe who really regard the welfare of mankind.

Opinions

Opinions which oppoſe the more important principles adopted through all ages by the general ſenſe of mankind, are probably wrong: they demand an earneſt, an immediate reſiſtance; they are poiſons which pollute the greater fountains of life; they are biaſſes which force the human conduct from that ſtrength and uprightneſs by which it ſupports and effects human happineſs. Such an evil is that principle which condemns an early religious education. In proportion as this principle is admitted, and influences human conduct, religion, as it is practice, muſt decline. We, its miniſters, ſhall be able to do little or nothing for the good of mankind. The proper recipients of our inſtructions will not exiſt; our work will become then a fugitive delineation upon the ſand; nay more, legiſlators, magiſtrates, and laws themſelves will then loſe their chief hold upon mankind; conſcience will be defective in its moſt powerful principle, and religious influence being unfelt, neither the dignity or agreeableneſs of the human character will be found in their utmoſt perfection. Deduct from mankind the influence of religion, and as

every

every individual becomes leſs perfect, ſo the collective body degenerates. Selfiſh conteſts, and a contentious purſuit of little intereſts, throw a confuſion over human affairs, and deform and darken human life: a ſcene (too common an one) which the philoſopher beholds with a ſmile of contempt, and the chriſtian with a tear of pity. But how ſhall we rectify theſe diſorders? By preventing as much as poſſible the only cauſe of them—the want of religion; by poſſeſſing men early with religious habits and principles, by forcing them to *bear this yoke in their youth*. By the laws of man, of nature, and of nature's God, we have the power for this purpoſe. But then it is ſaid, that although a good education is unqueſtionably right, yet, that it is likewiſe right not to principle a child in the doctrines of religion. Let us then examine whether this opinion is not a very evil one indeed, and founded (as all bad principles are) upon narrow views; let us ſee whether it is not the decrepit offſpring of pride, and a ſort of little ingenuity, or minute philoſophy, which is more ſpecious than ſolid, and would build a great truth upon a ſmall and inadequate foundation

of

of knowledge. Conſcious that a religious education is far, far beyond all other proviſions for the advancement of virtue, I cannot but expreſs myſelf with warmth upon this occaſion; beſides, to defend the greater intereſts of mankind without warmth, is to betray them, and if ſound reaſoning accompanies that warmth, they are defended; for then the evil principle is at once refuted and cenſured, an alarm is given to the untainted, and the public good is conſulted, by maintaining the majeſty of the moſt ancient and univerſal opinions.

We may likewiſe obſerve, that if without the pretence of this reprobated principle, parents are too apt to neglect the religious education of their children—it ſurely behoves the peculiar guardians and miniſters of truth to preclude them, if they can, from this miſerable ſubterfuge.

But I will now endeavour to prove that the fabricators of it have worked with very ſmall materials of knowledge reſpecting the human mind, and under the darkneſs of the moſt narrow views reſpecting religion itſelf.

Religion, ſo far as it is rather the work of human eſtabliſhment than divine, is aſſuredly

not

not the religion which it is now the main object of education to inculcate; more eſpecially it cannot mean the inculcation of of thoſe ſubtle metaphyſical differences which ſeparate the proteſtant churches: we are talking of children, and children cannot underſtand them. Ye may place before them the intricate machinery of words in which they are wont to be dreſſed, but to children they ſtill remain words which convey no ideas. The religion to be taught them is the religion of the word of God itſelf, and thoſe collections of plain, practical, and eternal truths, which the pureſt reaſon of man, aſſiſted by divine revelation, has invariably embraced throughout a long courſe of enlightened ages. The beſt part of this ſacred collection can be taught to children;* I mean ſome conceptions of God, and a Saviour, of death, and time, and eternity, of right, and wrong, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, enow to excite and aſſiſt the correſpondent habits and actions, as they in return contribute to the aſſiſtance and due impreſſions

* As it is perſpicuouſly taught in our church catechiſm.

of

of thoſe important truths. Practical principles, and practical habits, muſt aſſociate for their mutual benefit; God has joined them together, and woe be to that man that would rend them aſunder; but he would rend them aſunder who ſays "teach not a child his religion."

Teach not a child his religion; that is, preſs not your ſeal upon the wax when it is warm and ſoft: teach only the man his religion; that is, endeavour to make the requiſite ſignature when the wax is cold and hard. A child only can be taught his religion to any valuable purpoſe, for a child only can be trained into the proper practical habits; forbear to give him theſe, and in mature age teach him, if ye can, the great truths of religion. For what do ye then teach him? Mere words, as to any effect of them upon his conduct. Religion for its beſt, its practical purpoſes, may be as well underſtood by a child, as a man; and what is more than this, is but a perfective addition; the ſuperſtructure deſigned to finiſh the edifice of human virtue, which in general cannot exiſt if the foundation be not prepared in youth: in general it ſurely cannot. We have now no concern

concern with thoſe ſpecial inſtances of God's mercy to individuals, whom his fatherly chaſtiſements have made as ductile to truth, as one of thoſe little ones who are the general ſubjects of education. But perhaps I have not yet ſufficiently proved my point; to this end allow me to aſk you the following queſtion: what in effect does he ſay, who ſays, "do not educate a child in any religious ſyſtem?" Doth he not effectually ſay "leave the poor creature ſo perfectly at liberty, that it may ſtand a chance hereafter of thinking differently from all the wiſeſt and beſt men in all ages?" If theſe have all agreed in ſome truths, ſhall we not venture to inculcate ſuch truths on children? But if theſe truths are beſt enforced upon chriſtian motives and authority, ſhall we not in our method of inſtruction avail ourſelves of theſe motives and this authority? No; leave the poor infant in this great reſpect entirely to himſelf, deny him all the religious advantages which his civilized country preſents to him, and ſurrender him to all the unlettered licence of the Hottentot and Cannibal (for if he remains unlettered in the grand ſcience of morals and religion, he

is unlettered for the greateſt purpoſes of human exiſtence); nay more, by ſuch a deſertion you throw him into a far worſe ſtate than that of the moſt uncivilized barbarity. A man thoroughly devoid of religious principles and affections, in a country civilized like this, but like this multiform and variably luxurious, is in the moſt precipitate way to be more variably and extenſively miſchievous than the Savage unaccompliſhed with arts. For all arts, but the arts moral and religious, are to them, who who are unacquainted with theſe, but a larger treaſury of offenſive armour, and a ſuperior collection of means for the annoyance of other men. Were all the men of the learned profeſſions in the kingdom as diſhoneſt as they are learned, they would be more pernicious to ſociety than as many unlearned highwaymen. One perſon in the higheſt power, all-accompliſhed in every thing but virtue, may occaſion the miſery of millions: the lateſt ages may rue his irreligion. The creature, which this novel doctrine of no religious education would make a man, may not indeed, like the Cannibal, eat human fleſh, may not murder man for food; but he may be diſpoſed to murder him,

him, and more abundantly, for other ſelfiſh purpoſes; and he will probably be led in fact (whatever may be the intention) to perſecute him, and torture him in all thoſe ſeveral ways (who can number them?) which are ſuggeſted by the demands of a more refined and expenſive voluptuouſneſs, a more inſatiable avarice, and a more artful and aſpiring ambition. Theſe are modes of evil which are ſuggeſted only in their utmoſt diverſity and multitude in the ſcenes of civilized ſociety, and there chiefly where evil principles aſſiſt the ſeductive power of a ſcene abounding in all the means of ſeduction. It is only an early religious education that can nerve a man to bear ſo warm an atmoſphere.

Thus it appears that an ignorance of human nature has induced certain vain men to diſcountenance an early religious education—but I aſſerted alſo, that the ſame pernicious conduct might originate alſo in part from the narroweſt idea of religion; and I ſhall now, *laſtly*, endeavour to evince the propriety of this aſſertion.

The different churches of Chriſt are at this time ſo united in liberal views and ſentiments,

that the charities of genuine religion and ſcriptural chriſtianity are brought into ſuch manifeſt light, that a child religiouſly educated can ſcarcely, in this age, be any where ſo miſconducted, as to be tainted by ſuperannuated corruptions of the truth. The virulence of *their* contagion is indeed now no more. We are chiefly now to guard againſt the oppoſite exceſſes of human infirmity. For as if the human genius now ſprang forth into life with greater energies of nature, it deſpiſes antiquity, which ſurely had the ſame advantages of nature, and upon an average, more of literary induſtry. This is modern wiſdom, whoſe works are correſpondent to her conduct; they do not *praiſe her in the gate*. Narrow therefore are the views of thoſe, who from the dread of I know not what, unreal ſpectres, and long-buried terrors of unenlightened ages, would deny to the docile, the pliant, the vacant minds of youth, the poſſeſſion of the true religious principles. Theſe are founded and cemented, theſe are conſtructed and harmonized by the moſt univerſal, the moſt ancient, the moſt perfect conſent of human reaſon and divine revelation. Shall we then

leave

leave the vacant and ſuſceptible mind of youth unſupplied by this furniture, at once ſo uſeful, ſo neceſſary, and ſo precious; a treaſure which neither moth or ruſt ſhall corrupt; an armour which defies death, and withſtands the aſſaults of Time? No; for this would be to leave the human mind open to the certain ſeizure and tyrannic poſſeſſion of thoſe vagabond and lawleſs luſts which are ever roaming about, and on the eager watch to ſeize that tenement which is not guarded by religious principles. Theſe preventive guardians are there as cherubims to protect that paradiſe, a virtuous heart—and theſe too, like the cherubims of old, are armed with *a flaming ſword* of holy vigilance and fortitude, *which turns in their hands every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.**

Such is the effect of childhood principled in religious truths, and prepared with religious habits and affections: for I would repeat, that to root theſe in the heart of man, aſks an early and unremitting attention. God cannot be feared by us when we become men, unleſs

* Gen. iii. 24.

we have been bent from the commencement of ductile and tender childhood into the reverence of his holy name and law. It is not merely the belief of his exiſtence which creates the filial fear; it is the affectionately awful ſenſe of it (wrought by ſlow degrees, *here a line and there a line*) which can ſo fix the Divinity upon our ſouls, as to make us independent of all things but him, and to ſubject us into that abſolute ſubmiſſion to him, which is the duty of man, and which is alſo ſo neceſſary to man, that he cannot otherwiſe ſecure his proper character and proper happineſs: for theſe are never ſecured till he can *exultingly* ſay to Death, "*O Death where is thy ſting?*" or until he is in the habit of acting with an undiſtracted reference to eternity as well as time, and has blended the grandeur of the ſublimeſt hopes with the moſt amiable affections, and has ſo far rent himſelf from this paſſing ſcene, from all its poor arts and pleaſures, as to act readily according to the truth of things, and to bear about him in all his deſigns, conduct, and affections, the moſt ſubſtantial proofs that he knows himſelf to be on the paſſage towards a better

better ſtate of exiſtence. To fix him ſtrongly in this perſuaſion is the object of a religious education, and if he really is here but a probationary paſſenger to eternity, there cannot properly be but one *wiſe* method of educating youth, and every deviation from it is more or leſs pernicious. But it is to be expected in an age like this, which is luxurious and ſcientific, that in the conduct of education, the religious habits will be neglected, and the main ſtreſs will be laid upon the ſuperficial arts and accompliſhments which attract the admiration of the day; or upon thoſe ſciences, which however excellent and worthy to be known for the gratification of laudable curioſity, or as ſubſidiary inſtruments of uſeful activity: yet if little or nothing more is done than this in the great buſineſs of education, the moſt material part is left undone; for with all this, even the underſtanding itſelf may not be ſufficiently *ſtrengthened* to put forth its greateſt powers, and the moral bias will be wanting to give thoſe powers their moſt beneficial direction. The god of this world ſtill maintains his ſway, and man in general ſtill acts under the impreſſion of an un-

truth, or upon a falſe hypotheſis that we are not here in a ſtate of probation. It is not the cold *annunciation*, for *form ſake*, of religious tenets, but the moſt vivid *inculcation* of them, for *truth ſake*, into the young mind, which is the buſineſs of a religious education. God is not to be denied and diſhonoured in the ſlighteſt degree, and the fear of his holy name ſhould appear foremoſt in *all* the acts of man; we may not admit the ſlighteſt refinement in this momentous article, nor hazard, but at the greateſt peril, any addreſsful movements when man is to be trained into the fear of God. To ſpeak plainly—in the education of youth we muſt ſo conduct it, as to render and leave the religious ſenſe, tendency, and knowledge, ſo much ſtronger than any other, that the conduct of man may be proportioned to the truth of things, and that he may continue to obey God and ſeek heaven, agreeably to the tranſcendent majeſty of the one, and the tranſcendent bleſſings of the other. This is the happieſt method of ſimplifying, this the only method of dignifying the human character. But I leave you to judge whether this method is ſufficiently purſued, and whether

man

man would loſe any thing reſpecting this world were he thus trained into the knowledge, and ſenſe, and practice of whatſoever things are *true, and honeſt, and juſt, of whatſoever things are pure, and lovely, and of good report,* of every thing that may be called *virtue,* or that merits *praiſe.*

Weak is all the force of human laws without the ſupport of religious *manners.* Education prepares theſe, and on theſe depends chiefly the very exiſtence of perſonal happineſs and national proſperity. If this great object is overlooked, the deſtruction of a people is ſeen, is pronounced, is deſerved. Fortitude, Juſtice, Benevolence, Temperance, Piety—are theſe ſlight means for the protection of a nation? Have ye yet read of that people which was not duly guarded when theſe were their bulwarks?

Before a nation is ruined it muſt have become irreligious, in a certain ſenſe, heatheniſh, and *the heathen* muſt *furiouſly rage together, and the people muſt imagine a vain thing.**

Where is Hamath, and Arphad, and Sepharvaim? I would mean to ſay, where are

* Pſalm ii. 1.

now

now the flouriſhing empires of Chriſt which extended ſo far in Aſia, and in Africa, from the Perſian gulph to the ſtreights of Gibraltar? Alas! they would break their bonds of Chriſt aſunder, and caſt away his cords from them; but he that *dwelleth in heaven laughed them to ſcorn, and had them in deriſion; he ſpoke unto them in his wrath, and vexed them in his ſore diſpleaſure; his holy hill of Sion is now the habitation of the heathen*; and deſolation, ſlavery, and barbaric ignorance point us where his rod has fallen; and the wide-ſpread fragments of the potter's veſſel yield us an awful and neceſſary inſtruction. Yet are we, as a people, to look ſo far for our admonition? *Fuit ilium*. Are many years paſſed over us ſince we irrecoverably loſt one of the nobleſt limbs of our empire? I ſpeak no more of the paſt, for that may well ſpeak for itſelf; but reſpecting the future, believe me that whenever that day comes when chriſtian purity ſhall no more diſtinguiſh our manners, chriſtian integrity govern our intercourſe with mankind, chriſtian charity render it delightful, and chriſtian faith exalt us above the enervating pleaſures and debaſing profits of this paſſing life,

life, we ſhall become ſo unmanly, ſo ſelfiſh, ſo contentious, and ſo diſunited, that the Lord for the ſake of his holy name muſt rear again his iron rod, and *hiſt* to his tempeſts in the *North*, and eaſily ſhake to the ground the tree ſelf-ſmitten by its own devouring canker.

But let us hope for better things, and for the production of them call out by every method in our power their beſt and moſt efficacious inſtrument—the religious education of the riſing race. We want not ſchools and univerſities, nor the moſt productive fountains of learning and knowledge, but we want for their ſupport the aſſiſtance of parental authority and example; we want too, we require, and we have right to require the utmoſt aſſiſtance which the utmoſt power and utmoſt wiſdom of Government can give us in regulating this great public concernment—a greater cannot poſſibly be conceived. The active eye, and the generous heart, in union with the power of announcing, commending, adviſing, and rewarding uſeful exertion, ſhould eſpecially go forth every where to diſtinguiſh them who by the formation of youth in all laudable things are filling the firſt office of ſociety, by doing the beſt

beſt ſervice to the preſent and coming generation. It is the meaneſt impolicy, it is the deepeſt brand upon a country, when it is not in the *habit* of ſetting the higheſt merit of an individual, or a profeſſion in the higheſt place of honour.—But it is not within my ability or my time to enlarge upon this ſubject: I would rather turn my thoughts to the God of all our mercies, and beſeech him to advance the virtue which we have, and ſupply that which is wanting, that when we are gathered to our Fathers we may ſo conduct ourſelves as to tranſmit ſuch a virtuous race to the coming age, and gain ſo much upon the vices of the preſent, that the great Father of us all may look upon this people with a ſmile of approbation, beholding all orders of men bearing witneſs in their manners to our benevolent and preventive wiſdom; beholding the loweſt orders of men humble, unenvious, honeſt, cheerful, and induſtrious; beholding the middle ranks directing their profeſſions to their great public ends, and above all fraud, and fear, and ſelfiſhneſs, above all the little intereſts and faſhions of the day, and zealouſly and uniformly promoting the growth of everlaſting truth; beholding the higheſt

orders

orders of men, the noble and the powerful, ſenſible at laſt that *righteouſneſs* alone *exalteth* an individual and *a nation*, that to be debaſed by vice is the worſt debaſement, to be ignorant of their religious duty the vileſt ignorance, and to be inſulted by flattery the deepeſt inſult, that domeſtic virtue is the ſource of the ſweeteſt pleaſure, and genuine patriotiſm of the ſublimeſt exultation, that frugality is the parent of eaſe and generoſity, and juſtice of genuine dignity, that ſelfiſh luxury is the foe to *noble* hoſpitality, effeminate delicacy the moſt abject degradation of a man, and that the low traffic of *gaming* is the practice of the *noble* to demean themſelves beneath the *plebeian*, and by one vile habit to ſtrike all *nobleneſs* out of the human ſoul, and that nothing in ſhort is truly great and glorious but what can arm a man againſt the fear of death and a judgment to come: but this conſummation of the human character is not to be *univerſally* expected till ſuch a rooted ſenſe and affectionate apprehenſion of important truths relative to God and his law, to time and eternity, has by a long ſeries of inſtructions, inculcations, and habits, been ſo wrought into the reaſon,

the

the imagination, the paſſions, the habits, the very actions of a man, that he appears at length to be all alive (as life itſelf can be) to the following great practical truths.

That he is here but a paſſing pilgrim:—that he is here ſchooling for eternity:—that God being with him in his belief, in his heart, in all his actions, he is become victorious over want, and pain, and ſorrow:—that he is, even here, the exalted child of the pureſt peace and the nobleſt independence:—that he is become ſuperior to the intereſts of Time, and the terrors of Death:—that, in a word, he is on the ſure and ſteady march to a bleſſed eternity.

Nothing, nothing then but the narroweſt view of religion and of the human mind, could ever beget ſo prepoſterous an idea, as that the human individual may be ſafely left to years of maturity for the choice and acquiſition of his religion: ſince the ſhorteſt view of religion is—that it is a filial fear of God, and a moſt abſolute ſubmiſſion to his bleſſed will; for this indeed is (as it were) the great parental trunk of all thoſe ſeveral moral branches, and fruits, and flowers, whoſe

whoſe number, and flavour, whoſe beauty, bloom, and glory, though beginning and increaſing in Time, ſhall be found, under the ſmiling and foſtering radiance of the divine love, to be ſtill progreſſive throughout all ETERNITY.

SERMON

SERMON XII.*

ISAIAH xxxviii. 19, 20.

The living, the living—he ſhall praiſe thee as I do this day: the Father to the children ſhall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to ſave me: therefore we will ſing my ſongs to the ſtringed inſtruments all the days of our life, in the houſe of the Lord.

THAT Hezekiah was thus enabled by the divine mercy to lift up his heart in thankſgiving to God, we cannot wonder. For his truſt in the Lord God of Iſrael was ſo

* This diſcourſe, preached in the Chapel-Royal, November 9th, 1788, was printed and preſented to the Nobility who were preſent when it was preached, with the following notification.

"Mr. Butt preſents his moſt reſpectful compliments to the "Nobility who ſignified, through the polite conveyance of "Lord

ſo eminent, that *after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him; for he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments which the Lord commanded him.*

Well might ſuch a Prince ſo reſtored to his people ſay, *the Father to the children ſhall make known thy truth.* He might be certain that this would often be the intereſting matter of pious commemoration to his ſubjects. The fathers of the ſeveral families, who from their own age and experience, muſt have been beſt acquainted with his virtues, would teach their

" Lord Sydney, their wiſh, in union with his Lordſhip's, that " the following diſcourſe ſhould be publiſhed. The honour of " ſuch a ſignification was received with the utmoſt gratitude, " as a moſt obliging and reſpectable proof that the preacher " had performed his part *faithfully*, and that his noble auditors " were deſirous to *read* a diſcourſe which, from the melancholy " circumſtances of the day, they *heard* with the utmoſt indul- " gence. For this purpoſe it was the duty of the author to " *print* it with every ſentiment of reſpect and gratitude to the " Nobility who alſo honoured him with their requeſt to *pub-* " *liſh* it.

It is now publiſhed at the deſire of many reſpectable Subſcribers, and verbatim as it was originally preached and printed.

children how to eſtimate the goodneſs of God in the reſtoration of the public Father to life, and to health.

It may likewiſe be juſtly conceived (when ſuch a Prince was labouring under a dangerous ſickneſs) that the public fear would be excited in the greateſt degree, that the voice of lamentation would be univerſal, and that the prayers of the righteous would aſcend to the throne of God with the fervour of a ſon praying for the life of a beloved father. Alas! it is not difficult for *us* to conceive what was the ſorrow of the true Iſraelite, what the matter of his prayer to God when he was petitioning for the life of ſuch a king as Hezekiah.

Nothing can be more pathetic than the manner in which Hezekiah himſelf deſcribes his ſufferings upon the bed of ſickneſs; yet he ſurely muſt have had all the conſolations that a good man could receive under the Moſaic diſpenſation: but that was a hard taſk-maſter, whoſe yoke was not eaſy, whoſe burthen was not light, whoſe commandments were ſomewhat grievous. Fervent piety, and the conſciouſneſs of his virtue, could ſcarcely

ſuſtain

ſuſtain him above deſpondence: ſo imperfect were his views of a future exiſtence beyond the grave, that he could not but be very ſenſible to the terrors of death. As a man he muſt *naturally* have dreaded death; as a benevolent King he muſt, *upon reflection*, have dreaded it ſtill more, apprehenſive that it would deſtroy in him the moſt perfect form of human activity. His fear of death muſt have been proportionate to his love of his people. *I did mourn as a dove*, he ſaid; *mine eyes fail with looking upwards; O Lord I am oppreſſed, undertake for me.* He did not look upwards in vain; the Lord did undertake for him; *the Lord, in love to his ſoul* (a ſoul ſo replete with virtue), *did deliver it from the pit of corruption*; the Lord indeed was *ready to ſave him.*

It is clearly the firſt end of our holy religion to draw mankind into the habits of the moſt perfect virtue: for this exiſtence is aſſigned us; for this alone exiſtence is valuable. Chriſtianity contains the moſt perfect law of life; ſuperadding to human conceptions of virtue (excluſively of additional *motives*) more purity, love, and charity, than had been apprehended

by the moſt acute and comprehenſive reſearches of reaſon unaſſiſted by revelation.

The amiable affections, equally a part of virtue, are certainly the moſt immediate cauſes of happineſs: they are moſtly of the very eſſence of happineſs. Love, friendſhip, family concord, neighbourly, national harmony, are ideas as much aſſociated with that of joy, as the idea of the well-known fruit is with that of its well-known flavour. Whatever, therefore, tends to promote good-will among mankind is reſpectable, and ſhould be cultivated: it is not only the ſureſt, but the ſhorteſt road to happineſs. A good Father is the beſt means of uniting a private family in the bond of love, mutual charities, and regards. A good king has the ſame effect upon a nation. The brother uniting with the brother in the ſentiment of filial piety, ſtrengthens at the ſame time the fraternal and domeſtic concord. Subjects harmonizing with ſubjects in the ſentiment of loyalty, ſtrengthen at the ſame time the national concord. How great a bleſſing then to ſociety, how aſſiſtant to the advancement of public merit, and public happineſs, is a good King! Related through him

him to each other, we are brought forwards into a more amiable intercourſe in the proportion that we unite in honouring him. The effect is the ſame, whether the object of our ſympathy be his proſperity, or adverſity. We are not indeed ſo happy in the latter inſtance (witneſs our preſent ſorrow), but it has the ſame tendency to conciliate us to each other; and has, therefore, the beſt of tendencies, by increaſing our happineſs as individuals, and our ſtrength as a nation.

As human kind is uſually the ſame in the ſame ſituation, it is now, alas! too eaſy for us to conceive the univerſal ſorrow of Hezekiah's ſubjects when this father of his people was in that perilous ſtate, from which he was afterwards delivered by the divine mercy. It is indeed too eaſy for us now to conceive the ſentiments, and the conduct of his people upon this melancholy occaſion. The triumphant Conqueror, in his day of health and ſtrength, gratifies the pride, and it may be the meanneſs of his people. He cannot then learn their real ſentiments of him: his ſplendid condition calls out the clamour rather than the ſincerity of praiſe; it cannot then be diſtin-

guiſhed from adulation. But when he that fills the ſtation of Kings is upon the bed of alarming ſickneſs, is in danger of loſing all his earthly power and diſtinction, of being a king no more, of being no more with regard to this world—and yet is then regarded univerſally with all the tender ſentiments of reſpect and affection, when the affection of his people then grows more and more tender, their reſpect more and more ardent—he ſurely receives in this public tribute of the heart, this univerſal accord of loyal duty, that teſtimony to his perſonal worth which conſtitutes the moſt genuine glory. But if God ſhould ſpare his life in pity to the wants and prayers of his people, he is then advanced to the utmoſt degree of happineſs of which man is capable: he is preſented to ſuch a *re-union* (as it were) with his people, as doubles their mutual affection. *He was dead, and is alive again*, is their cry of heartfelt thankſgiving to God. Their voice of joy vibrates through his heart; he repays their preceding tears of tender anxiety with the tears of joy, of gratitude, of fatherly affection; for the remainder of his life,

life, his prevailing impulſe of mind is, I ſhould rather ſay, *continues* to be a prayer to God for his utmoſt bleſſings upon his loving and beloved people.

Such, ye well know, muſt have been the ſentiments of Hezekiah and his ſubjects; and ye can *now* eaſily conceive, but if not *now*, ſoon may the God of all our national mercies enable you to conceive, the full extent of their joy when the God of David heard the prayers of Hezekiah, *had ſeen his tears, had healed him*; and they with him went up into the houſe of the Lord, with the ſtringed inſtruments, to ſing the ſong of pious thankſgiving.

Ye will pardon me, if in this place I follow the natural courſe of my feelings, at a time when every where elſe an affectionate, a grateful, and underſtanding people, are warmly expreſſing the beſt of feelings upon a moſt intereſting and ſacred occaſion. Such an univerſal agreement in opinions and ſentiments, is not within our recollection: that thoſe ſentiments and opinions ſhould be what they are, who can wonder? Leaſt of all

ſhould they who were preſent with me (it is but a ſhort time ſince) when the ſame ſpirit of loyal affection burſt forth in the ſound of joy from the thouſands and ten thouſands, who then firſt ſaw the Sovereign whom they had ſo long reſpected. Alas! the inſtability of human happineſs—what a change has there been in a ſhort time? how rapidly have tears and ſorrowing anxiety, ſucceeded to the ſmiles and acclamations of joy! But the cauſe is the ſame, however different the effect; it is the ſame national affection, founded upon the ſame national wiſdom and humanity: we muſt have been defective in both, had our recent ſorrow been leſs than it was; yet I know not how it could have been greater. When this generation is no more, after ages will learn, from the records of this, the reſpectability of virtue in the Royal Character. This reign has been eventful; theſe times have been trying to the characters of thoſe who have been in the foremoſt ſtations of mankind. Ye muſt have obſerved with me, the power of virtue to ſecure its beſt friends: to you I need not make any application of this remark.

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The duty of the day is to draw religious profit from the melancholy occurrences which now chiefly occupy our attention, and to perform the part of loyal ſubjects (I need not remind you how much it is a chriſtian part), in praying to the King of Kings in behalf of that gracious Prince whom the divine mercy has beſtowed upon us.

We cannot but feel our affections towards this life ſomewhat diminiſhed, and attracted to a more perfect ſtate, when we conſider the moſt illuſtrious family, lately, to all appearances, the moſt happy, now, on a ſudden, depreſſed into that form of affliction which is the utmoſt miſery of which a virtuous mind is capable. Recollect more particularly what it is—the moſt affectionate of wives and children alarmed for the life of the beſt of huſbands and of fathers. But we are related to another world as well as this, and may derive a ſpiritual improvement from the ſubject of our preſent ſorrow. When the kings of the earth are thus afflicted, they ſhew us what man is at the beſt; they admoniſh us, by their human weakneſs, to look up to the King of Kings;

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and, by thus abaſing our utmoſt confidence in the *arm of fleſh*, they exalt us into the wiſdom of placing it there where our utmoſt confidence is well-founded, and with our obedience muſt terminate, through Chriſt, in our *utmoſt ſalvation*.

But when we recollect the ſacred relation which we bear to this illuſtrious family, not merely as the Royal Family of this great and renowned empire (a family beneath whoſe ſceptre it has been gradually riſing to greatneſs through a ſeries of centuries), but as that diſtinguiſhed branch of it ſo providentially united with us as to be a pledge, and means to us, as a people, to make us great, and happy, beyond the lot of all nations—when we recollect that the head of this illuſtrious empire, and family, ſuch a man, and ſuch a Prince, is now in a ſtate of health ſo alarmingly precarious—we cannot wonder if our prudential conſiderations, as well as generous ſentiments, ſhould conſpire to excite in us a dread of the worſt misfortune that could poſſibly befal us as a people.

That war from within ourſelves which ſo lately, like an earthquake, ſhook and diſſevered

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our empire, ſhakes us now no more. That war, flaming upon us from without, and from ſo many quarters, is now not only extinguiſhed, but in a manner that has increaſed our national reputation. The wings of Peace are at this inſtant brooding over us to bleſs us. Commerce has expanded all her ſails, and is now advancing nigher and nigher towards us, with all her enriching and civilizing influence: all the arts that poliſh and improve human life are now flouriſhing beneath the royal and national patronage; and perhaps, what is of moſt conſequence, our national virtue is, upon the whole, improving:—this is our preſent ſituation; this the aſpect of our public affairs;—the Sovereign experienced, and yet far from being declined into the vale of years, and as intent, as man can poſſibly be, to farther the welfare of his people throughout time, and throughout eternity. More I cannot ſay, and yet I ought not to ſay leſs. Ye know then that it is your duty as well as mine—in a moment—in a criſis like this—there to apply for help where it is only to be found, to the ſame God who reſtored Hezekiah to his people,

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who is the God of all nations, who ordereth all things, and duly regardeth the prayer of the righteous. Ye will certainly think with me, that on this very day (to me it is a very affecting thought, whether I feel as a man, as a Briton, or as a chriſtian), that *on this very day* as many, and as heart-felt prayers, teſtifying national *eſteem* and national *affection*, have been preferred to the throne of the Divine Goodneſs for our gracious Sovereign's reſtoration to health, as ever where preſented to heaven upon the like melancholy occaſion.

Ye will not then be wanting to your duty whilſt I am diſcharging mine, nor be unwilling again to unite with me in the moſt fervent and ſolemn ſupplication to Almighty God for his ſpeedy relief in this our day of diſtreſs.

O Lord of Hoſts, God of Iſrael, and of all nations; God of Gods, and King of Kings, *incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear.* Weigh not our offences, O God, but our wants; humiliate us by our fears, rather than by our misfortunes; and let us be ſoftened by the utmoſt gratitude, rather than the utmoſt diſtreſs. Thou, whoſe mercy reſtored Hezekiah

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to his people, compaſſionate our King and public Father. *Remember now, O Lord, we beſeech thee, how he has walked before thee in truth, and with an upright heart, and has done that which is good in thy ſight. Do not then deprive him, deprive us, of the reſidue of his years.* Let not the ſhadow of death blot out our Sun when he is in his noon-day ſtrength; but let us reap all the fruits of his royal experience and habitual virtues: let him live to ſee all his labours crowned, and all his wiſhes fulfilled in the virtue and proſperity of his family and people. Sooth, O God, the ſorrows, and ſpeedily remove, with their cauſe, the diſtreſs of the Queen, the unutterable anguiſh of the beſt of wives and of mothers. Grant unto him life, O God, *whoſe life praiſeth thee*, and long let him live to promote thy truth by his example and authority, to advance that *righteouſneſs which exalteth a nation*, and entitleth it to that *ſalvation which only cometh from thee*. O let us be for ever taught, by our preſent diſtreſs, that there is nothing powerful but God, nothing glorious but Virtue, and nothing worthy our utmoſt

utmoſt deſire but Heaven. *Hear our prayer, O Lord, and let our cry come unto thee; then ſhall we ſing our ſongs of praiſe and thankſgiving to the ſtringed inſtruments; then ſhall we lift up our Hallelujahs all the days of our life in thy houſe,* O Lord our God, O Lord our CREATOR, PRESERVER, and REDEEMER.

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